THE EAST CAME WEST

by PETER J. HUXLEY-BLYTHE

$2.50

The Cossacks, and more than a million Russians, fought against Communism during World War II, and they still hate Communism today. But they are not pro-American or pro-West.

While researching for material for the writing of THE EAST CAME WEST, Mr. Huxley-Blythe discovered why these people do not trust the United States or Great Britain. When the war in Europe ended, millions of Russian men, women, and children sought sanctuary and freedom in the West. They met terror face to face. They were physically beaten into submission and then shipped like cattle back to the U.S.S.R. to face Stalin's executioners or to serve long sentences in concentration camps.

The author claims that this brutal appeasement policy which was contrary to recognized international law, was initiated and carried out by the Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower.

From survivors Mr. Huxley-Blythe obtained the details of the Cossacks' fight for freedom from 1941 to 1945, and from them he learned the method used by the British to betray them.

Former members of the "Russian Liberation Army" and refugees told him of the treatment they had received from United States troops who were ordered forcibly to extradite them back into the hands of merciless Kremlin leaders.

The official record of this appeasement policy, "Operation Keelhaul," is still classified as "Top Secret" by Washington.

The last chapters of THE EAST CAME WEST show how current United States foreign policy makes the anti-Communist Russians regard America as equally as great a menace to them as Red domination.

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From a painting by S. G. Korolkoff

"The Last Betrayal" Lienz, Southern Austria. June, 1945

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PETER J. HUXLEY-BLYTHE

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The Cossackhood and all who
have laid down their lives in the cause of
FREEDOM

"Usually the age-old wisdom of people is expressed most vividly in its sayings and adages. Since long ago, the Russian people called England a Crafty Englishwomen (Kovarnaya Anglichanka). There are reasons to believe that, after what has taken place in Lienz (if this is not investigated, and due homage paid to the innocent victims), new and more weighty epithets, not flattering to the English, will be added to this appellation."

IVAN POLIAKOV,[1] "The Battle of Lienz," *Russia* (New York) August, 1953.

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[1] The Don Cossack General Poliakov was an eyewitness to many of the events to be described in this book.

I wish to thank the following people for their help because without their assistance this book would never have seen the light of day:

Madame and Miss Tiashelnikoff and the Don Cossack Nicholas V. Sheikin, who gave me an insight into the history of the Cossackhood. Generals V. Naumenko, I. Poliakov, I. Kononov, A. Holmston, Captain Dulschers, Otto-Manfred von Pannwitz, Colonels von Schultz and von Kalben, the late Captain N. Krasnov, the German journalist Jurgen Thorwald, Cavalry Captain A. Petrovsky, Hans de Weerd, Professor Dr. Grondijs, J. Bernard Hutton, W. Czorgut, Captain P. Jvanicas, Colonel Gneditch, F. Kubanksy, Lieutenant Colonel A. D. Malcolm, and the people who must remain unknown except for the initials S. B., J. P., S. M. . . . Finally, but by no means least of all, my wife Maxine.

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THE EAST CAME WEST

CHAPTER ONE

THE EAST IN FLAMES

IN THE EARLY HOURS of the morning of June 22, 1941, more than three million German soldiers swept across the frontier and penetrated deep into the Soviet Union. Then they received their first shock. The fierce resistance they had anticipated failed to materialize. Instead they were greeted by the overwhelming majority of the population as liberators, and at every village and town they entered crowds emerged to welcome them with the traditional offering of bread and salt.

This unexpected reception was not a manifestation of widespread pro-Nazism. It was the Russian people's first opportunity to escape from the terrorism of a regime that the United States Government branded "as intolerable and as alien" as Nazism[1] since the end of the Civil War in 1920.

Neither was the spirit of revolt limited to the civil population. Mass surrenders of Red soldiers became an everyday occurrence, and the majority of the prisoners immediately petitioned the German Supreme Command for permission to take up arms

[1] *New York Times*, June 24, 1941.

and fight alongside the Wehrmacht against a common enemy and to liberate their homeland.

Within five months of the invasion the Germans had collected 2,053,000 prisoners, and by March 1, 1942, the staggering total of 3,600,000. In the forefront of the millions who refused to defend the Communist state structure were the Cossacks, inveterate enemies of Stalin and all forms of dictatorship. Hitler, blinded by the racial policy of the former Russian Alfred Rosenberg, refused to accept the Russian anti-Communists as allies.

"It must never be permitted that anyone but the Germans bear arms! This is particularly important; even if in immediate terms it appears easier to draw on some other conquered nations for armed assistance, this is wrong! One day it shall hit out against us, inevitably and unavoidably. Only the Germans may bear arms, not the Slav, not the Czech, not the Cossack, or the Ukrainian!"[2]

Even before "Operation Barbarossa," the code name for the invasion of the Soviet Union, was launched, Hitler had issued to all army commanders on the Eastern borders orders recommending "the harshest and most ruthless measures" to be used when dealing with the Russians, irrespective of the individual's political orientation. And it was this *Untermenschen* — "subhuman" — policy which occasioned the mass starvation of hundreds of thousands

[2] *Trial of Major War Criminals*, XXIX, 88.

of Russian prisoners of war during the winter of 1941-42.

Fortunately this aspect of Nazi racialism did not extend to many front-line commanders, who, in direct defiance of Hitler's orders, started to recruit Russian volunteer units instead of condemning the Red Army defectors to POW death camps. And the Cossacks, being world-renowned for their fighting prowess, were among the very first to be utilized.

The first wholesale anti-Communist defection of Cossacks to the German lines took place on August 22, 1941, near Mogilev, when Major Ivan Nikitich Kononov and his Four Hundred Thirty-sixth Regiment defected.

Ivan Kononov was born on April 2, 1900, the son of a Don Cossack captain, in the Novonikolievskoi *stanitza*.[3] His father, true to Cossack tradition, spent all his life as a soldier. During World War I he was badly wounded and was still in hospital when Russia collapsed. In 1918 he had recovered sufficiently to return to his native stanitza, but when the Communists occupied it they hanged him and shot his wife.

Young Ivan finished his primary schooling in 1910, and the following year passed the entrance examination to the high school in Mariupol, where he lived with his aunt. It was she who, following the murder of his parents, suggested that he volun-

[3] *Stanitza*—a Cossack village.

teer to serve in the Red Army and so disguise his "bourgeois" background.

Having enlisted as a laborer, Kononov was a simple soldier in 1920, serving in the Fourteenth Cossack Division of Budenny's First Cavalry Army. Two years later he completed a course for junior officers, and promotion came rapidly after that. By 1927 he had successfully completed a course at the Moscow Military Academy and was a platoon commander in the Twenty-seventh Regiment, Fifth "Blinov" Cavalry Division. While serving in the Blinov Division he held various commands and remained there until 1935, when he entered the Frunze Military Academy.

Qualifying as a General Staff officer, he was posted to the Operational Staff of the Second Corps of the Red Army. When the Soviet Union invaded Finland in 1940 he was sent into action as commanding officer of the Four Hundred Thirty-sixth Infantry Regiment and, because of his ability and gallantry on the battlefield, was subsequently awarded the Order of the Red Star. And it was as a major commanding the Four Hundred Thirty-sixth Regiment that he found himself facing the advancing Wehrmacht in the summer of 1941.

Major Kononov can be described as a typical Red Army officer. As far back as 1924 he had been a member of the Komsomol (Communist Youth) organization, and from 1927 until the day he went over to the Germans he was a member of the Soviet

Communist party. But, as with so many Russians, his membership was a mere formality, and he hated the regime he was serving and waited for the day to come when he could strike a blow against it.

Even prior to the Finno-Soviet War, Kononov had been contemplating how he could assist in the destruction of the Communist system, yet he could see no signs of a widespread revolt being organized. There were too many Red spies, and he knew that if a revolt was to be successful it would have to receive external assistance. This was something that Finland was not in a position to give. So he waited.

He chose his moment carefully. On August 3, 1941, his regiment had launched a successful and daring counterattack against the Germans. During the heat of the battle, with only a few trusted officers knowing his plans for the future, Kononov sent an emissary over to the Germans to inform them that he had elected to join them with his entire regiment, to form the nucleus of a "Russian Liberation Army."

The emissary returned with a written guarantee of safety from the opposing German commander and the news that the German Army High Command had accepted his plan. At the same time as his return, a Major Posdnyakov arrived from the nearby Red Sixty-first Divisional HQ to congratulate Kononov on his recent victory and to inform him that he was being recommended for a suitable decoration.

Within hours of Major Posdnyakov's departure, Kononov assembled the regiment. "My victorious soldiers, I want to speak to you from my heart and not with my head.

"I have decided that this is the moment to declare war upon Stalin and the Communist regime, and therefore I intend to cross the front line with as many of you as may wish to accompany me.

"Those of you who want to join me in fighting for Mother Russia stand to the right and those who wish to remain go to the left." He promised those who wished to stay that no pressure would be brought to bear upon them to make them change their minds, or would he think any the less of them for having reached that decision. Everyone went to the right. His men, who called him *Batka* or Poppa, felt as he did down to the newest recruit.

The Germans were very surprised when the entire regiment joined them. They had not believed that such a thing was possible, and therefore they had made no plans to receive and billet them.

When accommodations had been found for them, General von Schenkendorf invited Major Kononov and his fellow officers to a party, where the Major again appealed for the formation of a "Russian Liberation Army" and stressed his belief that the Russians, detesting Stalin, would then launch a counterrevolution from European Russia to the Pacific coastline and destroy Communism once and for all time.

Schenkendorf fully agreed with his proposals and, without paying any attention to Hitler's dictates, authorized Kononov to form the One Hundred and Second Cossack Regiment, whose regimental banner later carried this inscription:

Down with Soviet Rule. Long live the Free Cossacks.
Kononov
Cossacks and other Nations of Russia who have united in struggle to liberate the people of Russia.

Before long the Cossack Regiment was in action in the front line as well as against Red partisan bands, and each time it went into action more Red soldiers joined to swell its ranks. To Cossacks everywhere, the One Hundred and Second Regiment meant hope for the future.

Writing from Berlin on December 20, 1941, the famous Cossack General Peter N. Krasnov, hero of the Russian Civil War and author of numerous books, including the outstanding *From Double-Headed Eagle to Red Flag*,[4] wrote this to Major Kononov:

Dear Ivan Nikitich. Please accept on behalf of myself and all former Cossack officers and men our sincere greetings. We are all watching with great interest your remarkable achievements in the fight against Communism.

Our quiet Don, Kuban, Terek, and Ural[5] are awaiting liberation, and for them, as for us, you are our only hope. We can assure you that we are all with you in spirit and wish you personal good health and many future successes.

[4] London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1928.

[5] Cossack *voiskos*, or regions.

However, the dream of a "Russian Liberation Army" was not to be realized. Despite his earlier order Hitler had been ignored, and hundreds of Russian units were serving alongside the Wehrmacht, although most of them were comparatively small. In view of developments, Hitler issued Order No. 215 dated January 13, 1942, which emphasized that no Russian unit was to be more than battalion strength and that in every case the officers of such units were to be German and, if possible, the NCO's as well. The idea being "so as to indicate that the ordinary Russian soldier is good but not the officers or NCO's."

Hitler was being forced to eat his own words. Only three months earlier he had told the German people: ". . . The German soldier opposes an enemy who, I must admit, does not consist of human beings but of animals, of beasts. We now have seen what Bolshevism can make of men. We cannot even hope to give the people back home an idea of what we have seen. It is the most horrible thing ever conjured up by a human brain—an enemy who fights on the one hand out of sheer bestial thirst for blood, coupled with cowardice and fear of commissars on the other. That is the country our soldiers now have come to know after almost twenty-five years of Bolshevik rule. . . ."[6]

Yet again General von Schenkendorf chose to ignore the Fuehrer. He simply changed the title of

[6] *Voelkischer Beobachter,* October 4, 1941.

the One Hundred and Second Cossack Regiment to the Six Hundredth Don Cossack Battalion without reducing its size, and left Kononov and his officers in sole command without any German overseers.

Due to the successes achieved by the Six Hundredth Don Battalion in the autumn of 1942, Kononov was promoted to lieutenant colonel, and some two hundred Cossack battalions could be found scattered along the length of the German front.

The case of Kononov's Cossack hatred of the Soviet system was by no means unique. According to a survey carried out by the postwar Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR in Munich, Germany, and based upon Soviet statistics, this was the state of mind of the Cossackhood in the early days of the German-Soviet War:

Occupied Provinces or Regions		% anti-Germnan	% anti-Soviet	% indifferent
Don & Kuban—	Town	11	85	4
	Village	4	87	9
North Caucasus—	Town	6	86	8
	Village	4	76	20

Those percentages were amply substantiated by the reaction of the Cossack population as General Koestring advanced toward the Caucasus in the summer of 1942 and the Army Group of Field Marshal von Weichs marched into the northern region between the rivers Don and Volga.

Whereas the Soviet officials and a few staunch Communists fled at the approach of the Germans, the Cossacks did everything they could to remain behind and fall into German hands. Thousands of younger men went into hiding so that the Soviets could not forcibly evacuate them.

The Wehrmacht captured Novocherkassk on the river Don early in August, 1942. But as a result of the Stalin "scorched earth" policy, forcible evacuation plus German reluctance to restore civil order, chaos reigned in the town and surrounding countryside. Then, when the Germans did decide to act, they made the mistake of using the former Soviet machine which still harbored a proportion of Communists who had been instructed to remain in the rear to act as saboteurs. This alarmed the population and, to add to their misgivings, Stalin had insured that everyone knew how the Nazis had starved to death more than a million Russian soldiers who went West looking for a way to wage war upon Communism.

This state of affairs did not last very long. When the last vestiges of Communism had retreated from the vast rural areas the laws of the Cossackhood reasserted themselves. In every stanitza, *Atamans*[7] were democratically elected. The hated collective farms were dissolved and private ownership according to tradition restored; the cattle, other livestock, and farming machinery were divided up and, to

[7] *Atamans*—chief spokesmen.

guard their newly found freedom, *sotnias*[8] were formed first in Mechetinskaya, then in Golubinskaya, and later throughout the entire area.

While this was happening the Terek Cossacks received a surprise. One of their dead heroes, Nikolai Lazarevitch Kulakov, who had allegedly died from wounds he had received during the Civil War came back to life to lead them against the Communists.

The story of Kulakov all started in January, 1920, when the First Volga Regiment of the Volunteer Anti-Communist Army was making a fighting retreat toward the Black Sea under extreme pressure from a numerically superior Red enemy. Snow and ice hampered the retreat, and the numerous battlefields were easily distinguished by the blood-soaked snow.

It was on such a battlefield near Kavkazkaya that Lieutenant Nikolai Kulakov, deputy commander of the regiment, was deploying his men to face yet another Red onslaught. The battle was savage. No mercy was shown by either side. Then the Red gunners found the correct range, and a shell exploded only a few feet away from the Lieutenant. Mercifully he was knocked unconscious, only to awake some time later to find himself being painfully jolted along in a ramshackle old cart. His legs were a twisted mass of sinew, muscle, and blood.

The ambulance, such as it was, duly arrived at Kavkazkaya railroad station, where he was put onto

[8] *Sotnia*—a cavalry unit comprising one hundred horsemen.

a waiting train. The doctors tried to relieve his agony with the limited medical means at their disposal, but it was too late to save his legs and when the train arrived at Pashkovskaya they were both amputated. It was then that his numerous friends, for he was already a famous figure, thought that his twenty years of soldiering were over.

While still recovering from the crude anesthetic he was told a woman was waiting to see him. He had no idea who it could be as he knew no one in that desolate place. It was his wife Dasha, who had been searching for him ever since she had heard the news that he had been wounded. Together they were taken to Novorossijsk, where they hoped they would be safe. They were not. Again the Volunteer Army had to retreat, and the order to retire came so unexpectedly that there was no time to evacuate the wounded.

Despite the valiant efforts of his wife to hide him from the Red Army, Kulakov was captured. Dasha went from office to office pleading with everyone she could find to listen to her. "My husband is dying so you have no need of him," she would say. "Let him return home with me to die in peace." Her eloquence was rewarded, and on a warm July day in Ekaterinodar, where Kulakov had been imprisoned, he was released only to find that the Communist headhunters, the Cheka, were waiting for him.

The Cheka asked him to fill in a form, and after

discussing what he should write with his wife he decided to tell the truth. As a former Cossack officer, an enemy of the Soviets, he was transferred to a brickworks which the Cheka had transformed into a massive torture and slaughter house. Nearly out of her wits with anxiety, Dasha again started the endless round of visiting Red officials pleading for her husband's life; asking that he be allowed to die in peace. Again her efforts were successful, and she was given permission to take him back to their native stanitza.

They arrived home late one night and were welcomed by Dasha's uncle and Kulakov's three-year-old son, Kolia. But it was not a joyful reunion. Her uncle had bad news. The local Cheka were going to arrest Kulakov the following morning.

All night long the couple worked while Kulakov lay helpless watching them, and by morning they had dug a secret cellar under the floor of the entrance hall. Being sure that it was only a matter of time before the Communists were defeated, Nikolai Kulakov entered the tomb without any misgivings. Days went past. The days became months and the months years, and Kulakov became a legend. Dasha had told the Cheka that her husband had died on their way back home.

He stayed in his grave until the Red Army was driven from the stanitza, and then, putting on his carefully kept uniform and buckling on his sword, he emerged into a world of day and night instead

of a life of permanent darkness. On wooden legs that he had carved himself to pass the long and lonely hours Nikolai Kulakov went from stanitza to stanitza in a *matroika,* a three-horse-drawn carriage, calling upon his fellow Terek Cossacks to form sotnias and take up the struggle against Stalin and Communism.

Back in Novocherkassk the Cossack population elected yet another "dead" Civil War hero to be their Ataman, Sergei V. Pavlov. Anxious to counteract the German actions in the town and to form independent Cossack units, Ataman Pavlov established, without any help from the Germans, a Cossack military and civil headquarters.

Sergei Pavlov was born the son of a Cossack officer in Novocherkassk in 1896 and, after passing through the Cadet Corps School of the Don and the Nikolaevsky Cavalry School, graduated as a second lieutenant in 1914. Like millions of others, he went straight into the front line and into the annals of the Cossackhood.

Awarded the Sword of St. George and other decorations for gallantry, he volunteered for service in the Air Force in 1916. Owing to the slow training schedule, he was too late to go into action against the Germans again as a pilot. Before he graduated, with honors, the February "Kerensky," 1917, revolution broke out and then came Lenin and the Communists.

As quickly as he could Pavlov returned to his

beloved Don country and enlisted in a partisan unit commanded by Centurion Dimitriev. In a matter of days he was in the thick of battle again, only this time he had neither a horse nor an aircraft. Instead he built an armored train and penetrated far behind the Red lines with it, shooting up trains and troop concentrations. On one raid he was seriously wounded, but he made a speedy recovery and, following the formation of the Don Army in 1918, he was appointed commander of another armored train, the "Cossack," which operated behind the enemy front and caused havoc.

When the Don Air Force was formed, Pavlov entered it as a pilot in the Second Squadron, where he served until the Don was finally occupied. Then his luck ran out. He was unable to escape to the Crimea, the last outpost of Russian anti-Communist resistance, and had to go into hiding with his wife in the Kuban region.

After a lot of trouble he managed to obtain forged documents for his wife and self which purported that he had been demobilized from the Red Army. Armed with those papers, the Pavlovs made their way back to the Don.

At first they nearly starved since he was unable to go before a registration committee, a prerequisite to obtaining work, as all of them were notorious for the way in which they unearthed former Tsarist and anti-Communist officers. Later, and through the compassion of certain professors, many

of whom were secret sympathizers of the White cause and who guessed that he was a former officer, he was allowed to enter and graduate from a technical college as a construction engineer.

Until the Germans arrived and after hiding to avoid forcible evacuation with the Red Army, Pavlov took no part in politics. He waited for an opportune moment.

It was solely due to his initiative that the First Regiment of Don Volunteers was formed, together with a training company, in August, 1942. Other regiments followed, among them the First Sinegorsky, and all of them acknowledged Ataman Pavlov as their supreme commander.

The Germans ignored what Pavlov was doing, and he had to arm his men with weapons the fleeing Red Army had left behind. After a short time certain German "experts" arrived and attempted to dictate to the Cossackhood what should be done, but the inhabitants were not interested in bolstering the German war effort and told the newcomers to mind their own business.

Certain officials became incensed at this behavior and threatened to order the Wehrmacht to take punitive action against them for disobedience. Not cowed by threats, the Cossacks replied that if there was any further interference in their domestic affairs they would summon all the Cossack forces fighting alongside the Wehrmacht home to wage a war against two enemies, the Reds and the Germans.

This could have been disastrous, and so they were left in peace.

Only one man from Berlin, a Dr. Richard from the Ministry for Eastern Affairs led by the notorious Russophobe Alfred Rosenberg, seems to have made any impression on Cossack politics. He virtually attached himself to Ataman Pavlov and kept suggesting that his forces be used to help the Wehrmacht, but he made no concrete suggestions as to how this should be done. In return for this aid Dr. Richard offered, in the name of the Nazi Government, that once the Germans had won the war a Cossack State would be established comprising the Don, Kuban, and Terek regions and incorporating the rich Don basin. Neither Pavlov nor any of his associates believed what Richard said, although they kept silent, hoping to increase their forces.

The Wehrmacht remained aloof from Pavlov save for one liaison officer, Captain Mueller, who was empowered to supply the Cossack regiments with food and captured Soviet small arms and parts of Red Army uniforms.

While his forces gained strength, the Ataman sent a delegation of trusted men to Berlin to see General Krasnov and place all their resources at his disposal. Krasnov, for certain reasons,[9] thanked them for the honor that they had paid him but refused to take an active part in the fight.

Daily the size of the Cossack forces grew, and it

[9] See chap. ii.

was not long before Pavlov's HQ was commanding ten regiments and innumerable defense sotnias and partisan units.

A Colonel von Freytag-Loringhoven saw the vast potential that the Cossack uprising held, and he obtained permission to start recruiting men into regular formations which would be subordinated to a strict German control rather than to local Atamans. To assist him in his work he was allowed to use a former Soviet ammunition factory at Voenstrog Seleshchina as a recruiting center.

Volunteers were quick to answer the Colonel's call to arms, and thousands of Cossacks who were starving to death in POW camps also asked for permission to enlist. And that presented a difficulty. To avoid death, thousands of non-Cossacks tried to assume that status and, to sort out the imposters, for Freytag-Loringhoven had strict instructions to recruit no Russians—only Cossacks—he established a commission which went around the camps to interview each volunteer and ask questions that only a true Cossack could answer; questions about the Cossackhood and its traditions.

In addition to his Cossack formations, Freytag-Loringhoven also managed to form sixteen squadrons of Kalmuck cavalry totaling thirty thousand personnel. He could do this inside the restrictions of his orders, because the Kalmucks, although nomads, belong half to the Don and the others to the Astrakhan Cossacks. They were brilliant fighters in

an undisciplined way. Given an order to accomplish a mission that they agreed with, nothing could stop them. However, if they disagreed with the order, nothing could make them advance. Another thing that annoyed the Germans was the Kalmuck refusal to accept tactical instructions. To them only the objective mattered, and there was, in their military philosophy, only one way to win a battle—a head-on charge, ignoring the losses.

That was only the German side of the picture because the Soviets were not inactive during this period. Moscow had watched the Cossack revolt and studied it carefully. Stalin had witnessed the mass surrender of the Chechen-Ingush Republic and the Crimea with horror, and issued instructions that every attempt was to be made to seduce the Cossacks into supporting the regime.

At first leaflets were clandestinely circulated, telling them that if they would help in the fight against Germany, Stalin promised that with a Soviet victory he would allow them to form a free republic without any Moscow interference; to live in the traditions of their forefathers; to abolish the hated collective farms; allow free enterprise to flourish; let them have freedom of worship; and prevent the NKVD[10] from operating within the Cossack Republic. No one believed what Stalin said. They had suffered too long at his hands and heard many similar promises, never fulfilled, before.

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[10] NKVD—Soviet Secret Police.

When that maneuver failed, specially trained units of Red Cossacks were sent home or dropped by parachute to create friction between the local populace and the Germans. Some of these units poisoned the drinking wells so that German horses and livestock died, and larger groups attacked isolated German outposts in the hope that the occupation troops would be provoked into unleashing a wave of reprisals against innocent people. These attempts, and others, were doomed to failure. The Cossacks quickly discovered who the *agents provocateur* were and executed them, and defense units tracked down and destroyed the Red partisan bands.

It was in December, 1942, following the Soviet encirclement of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, that the Cossacks really achieved prominence in the eyes of the German High Command. For the forces of Ataman Pavlov, who were still armed with former Red Army weapons that were totally inadequate for real active service, were the only available soldiers remotely capable of repelling the large Red force advancing on the Don. To meet the emergency, the stocky and slightly balding German cavalry officer, Colonel Helmuth von Pannwitz, was ordered to assume military control of one thousand Pavlov Cossacks; weld them into a single fighting unit and stem the Soviet advance.

The first Red Army thrust was made in the direction of Novocherkassk, and the troops under von Pannwitz were waiting for them. It was a bloody

battle. The Cossacks were fighting to defend their own land, to protect their families; and once they received the order to attack they advanced like a plague of locusts on a rich and fertile farm. Their losses were heavy, but on and on they went without faltering. Horses were shot from underneath their riders, who picked themselves up, caught riderless mounts, and charged forward again. Nothing could have stopped them. They were invincible, and the Red soldiers, demoralized by the fury and anger of their fellow countrymen, began to retreat, then they started to run. It was a complete routing, and the Cossacks captured three thousand prisoners and an immense amount of booty, which replenished their desperate need for arms, ammunition, uniforms, and especially boots. For his part in the counteroffensive von Pannwitz was awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, the 167th soldier to receive that decoration.

Until a few weeks or so prior to the battle, von Pannwitz had never even met a Cossack, let alone commanded a thousand of them. Yet his heart was fired by their gallantry and way of life, so that he spiritually became one of them. Perhaps that was his destiny, for as one Cossack who served under him said, "Even among genuine Cossacks one will not find a Cossack to equal our *Batka*[11] von Pannwitz." He had another link with the Cossackhood. He was born on October 14, 1898, and his birthday

[11] *Batka*—father.

is the Cossack religious holiday called "Pokrov" or "The Feast of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin —in memory of the miraculous saving of Constantinople from the advancing hordes."[12]

There is little doubt that his birthplace, his father's estate at Botzanovitz in Upper Silesia, was to play an important role in von Pannwitz' future as the German equivalent of the British Lawrence of Arabia, because it was directly on the German-Russian frontier of that time.

He grew up in a Slavonic atmosphere, and when he was old enough he was entered in a German cadet school. A few years later, when the first World War broke out, he was the standard-bearer for the First Lancers based at Milittsch. At the very early age of sixteen he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and that same year was one of the first in his regiment to be decorated with the Iron Cross, First Class. Immediately after the war he fought in the ranks of the Volunteer Corps against Communism.

After spending a year in Hungary, von Pannwitz returned to Poland in 1923, where he lived and worked as a farmer, and during that time his appreciation of the Slavonic people increased. He grew to understand their buoyant enthusiasm; their mysticism, and their unquestioning acceptance of fate.

In 1934 he returned to Germany, and was recalled to the Army to serve with the Seventh Cavalry

[12] Prazdnik Pokrova Presviatoi Bogoroditsy.

Regiment based in Breslau. From there he was sent as a cavalry squadron commander to the Second Regiment in East Prussia, and later as a detachment commander with the Eleventh Cavalry Regiment at Stockerau near Vienna. World War II found him as the commander of a Reconnaissance Detachment. But, despite his military background, when the Wehrmacht invaded Poland he was not slow or inarticulate about criticizing the way the Polish people were treated. He was one voice crying in the wilderness, and the Nazi racialists carried on their reign of terror.

With the invasion of the Soviet Union, von Pannwitz once again took up the cudgel on behalf of the Slavs. He protested at the criminal way millions of Russian prisoners of war, most of them anti-Communists, were herded together in open fields, without food, water, or a roof over them, and allowed to die in any way they chose.

He was not alone this time in debunking the stupid policy employed against the Russians, but the leading Nazis, intoxicated with the initial military successes and daily predicting the fall of Moscow, saw in the growing mounds of dead Russian POW's a means of exterminating potential future enemies, Russian patriots. In any case he was not in a position to reach senior members either of the Nazi party or the Wehrmacht. That only came when he was appointed, for a few months in the summer of 1942, to the Headquarters of the Army,

the OKH, in East Prussia. Then he did manage to expound what he considered to be a realistic policy to people who really mattered.

To both the then Chief of the General Staff, General Zeitzler, and to Himmler, the man who ordered all units of the S.S. to treat Russians as *Untermenschen*—subhumans—Colonel von Pannwitz advocated an immediate reversal of the treatment of POW's and the formation of a Free Russian Army that would fight alongside the Wehrmacht as equal allies. This was contrary to Hitler's ideas, so neither expressed any interest in his proposals.

Back in the Don region the December, 1942, victory of the Cossacks was only a temporary stop-gap, and the mounting Red Army pressure reached flash point in January, 1943, and on February 5, 1943, Novocherkassk fell to the Communists. To the Cossacks who had gaily heralded the Red retreat and who never considered the idea that the long arm of Stalin could return to reap vengeance, the earlier German withdrawal from the Caucasus meant disaster.

The New Year of 1943 saw the start of one of the greatest treks of all time. First the Kuban and Terek Cossacks, together with Caucasians, started to go West. Then the Cossack families from the Don joined the ever-growing stream, with only a few thousand staying behind to act as anti-Communist partisans, armed with the naïve belief that the Germans

would return as soon as their forces had regrouped and been brought back to full fighting strength.

More than a hundred thousand people with their few worldly possessions piled high on *kibitkas*[13] or strapped to their backs and driving their cattle before them — with a sprinkling of camels from the Trans-Volga Steppe — were on the move, and it looked as if the entire East were moving West, looking for a new dawn.

In the early days of the campaign on the Eastern front the "Italian Expeditionary Corps in Russia," commanded by General (later Marshal) Giovanni Messe and consisting of a hundred thousand men, was under strict German military control.

On April 1, 1942, the Corps was transformed into the ARMIR (the Italian Army in Russia) and initially it was thought its commander would be the heir to the Italian throne, Prince (now ex-King) Umberto. However, this did not materialize, and the Army was commanded by General Italo Gariboldi.

Despite the allegedly close ties between the Nazi and Fascist governments, the Italians refused to accept or adhere to the Nazi racial-supremacy creed, which defined all Russians as "subhumans," and virtually every day "Radio Roma" talked about and advocated the liberation of Russia instead of its destruction and colonization. As a result, of

[13] *Kibitkas*—canvas-covered carts.

that realistic policy, the many thousands of Red Army soldiers who were captured or surrendered to ARMIR were treated with dignity and humanity.

At one large POW camp some ten thousand POW's lived in tents without any barbed-wire fences to restrict their movement. In fact, the only Italians in the camp were the commandant, his adjutant, and a doctor. The prisoners were put on their honor not to escape and, having given that promise—which was not broken by any of them—were allowed to go into the surrounding forest to fell trees for heating as and when they saw fit and without any guards.

There was only one occasion when the POW's refused to obey an order, and their disobedience was understandable. They refused to tend or have any contact with a wounded Politkom (Communist Political Commissar) who had been placed in their midst. Their reaction was that the Politkom, in the past, had been responsible for much suffering and death, and there was no reason why he should not be left to suffer and thereby learn what it was like. In the end the camp commandant ordered an Italian soldier to look after him.

In return for this understanding, the POW's, anti-Communists to a man, were ready to do anything to help the Italians, and General Gariboldi suggested that after suitable screening the majority be sent to Italy to work in the mines, where there was a shortage of manpower. His plan was vetoed

by Mussolini, who thought they might be a disturbing influence upon the population.

There were many cases when individual Italians risked Nazi displeasure by saving Russian anti-Communists from the Gestapo or by obtaining food for them. One of my informants told me a heart-rending story.

His father had been arrested by the Gestapo, although he was innocent of any crime. Despite efforts to secure his release, the Gestapo refused to reconsider the case. In desperation my informant went to see an Italian liaison officer and begged him to intervene. The Italian said he would do what he could, and immediately went to the local Gestapo chief and demanded the release of the man. Arrogantly the Nazi refused. The prisoner, according to him, was a known anti-Nazi. Without further ado the Italian flew into a rage. He shouted and harangued his case with typical Latin exuberance, although he knew positively nothing about the prisoner's background. In the end he proved quite correctly to the Nazi that the prisoner was not the man concerned; their surnames were the same but there the similarity ended. The Gestapo promised to release him, but failed to do so until the Italian demanded he be set free without delay.

There was another example when an Italian officer ordered a full military ration to be given to an old Russian peasant woman because she reminded

him of "the old nurse he had seen portrayed in a Tchaikovsky opera before the war."

All those simple acts of kindness were understood and appreciated by the Russians as the following incident shows only too well.

During the winter retreat of 1942-43, the Italian guards at a POW camp retired after telling the fifteen hundred prisoners they were free men again. But instead of rejoicing and going East, going home, the fifteen hundred former Red Army men formed a long column and marched westward and reported to the nearest Italian commander, requesting they be accepted as prisoners once again. Their request was granted!

One Italian cavalry officer, the Count of Campello (Conte R. di Campello), implemented a policy of Russian liberation with Italian permission and after the German High Command refused to accept his ideas. As a breeder of race horses before the war, the Count had an instinctive high regard for the Cossacks, and when he found that many of these fine warrior horsemen of the steppe were among those surrendering to ARMIR he formed a Cossack Cavalry force.

Because of conditions prevailing at the front at that time, he was unable to provide his men with new uniforms so they continued to wear their Red Army issue but without the Communist insignia. They fought well, and at one stage of the retreat the Count of Campello was wounded and captured

by the Red Army. When his Cossacks heard the news they did not wait for any orders but went straight into the attack.

In the beginning, and because they were wearing Red Army uniforms, the Soviet troops did not open fire until the Cossacks were on top of them and then a massacre followed. The anti-Communist horsemen cut through the Red line like a hot knife through butter, and before long their commander was liberated and placed, very carefully, upon a horse-drawn sledge.

By that time, the Soviet soldiers had recovered from their initial surprise and closed the gap. The Cossacks were surrounded. Undeterred by the heavy fire which poured into their midst from all sides, the Cossacks kept circling around the wounded Count and cutting a way through to freedom for him. Their valor was crowned with success. They reached the safety of their own lines and the commander's life was saved, but hundreds of them failed to return from their errand of mercy; they had fulfilled the greatest act of Christian sacrifice in as much as they laid down their lives for their friend.

Very little is known about the military actions fought by the Count's formation or what finally happened to them. The same is true about the Cossack Division formed by ARMIR, which fought many gallant battles. The latter is mentioned frequently in the official Italian history of the war in Russia, but without details.

Some people believe the Cossacks were simply left to their own devices when the Eastern front collapsed, while others maintain many of them reached what they thought would be the safety of Italy only to be forcibly repatriated to the U.S.S.R. by the Western Allies. And, unfortunately, the Count of Campello is dead, having died recently at his home outside Rome.

It is a great pity the details are unknown, because the Italian Army and the Italian people have every reason to be proud of this hitherto unknown aspect of World War II.

According to one Russian who served as an interpreter with the Italian forces in Russia, writing under the pen name "A. Morelli" in the Russian *émigré* military magazine *Sentinelle,* published in Belgium in 1951, ". . . The Germans lost the war [in the East] because of their inhuman treatment of the Russian people who replied by heroically defending their homeland.

"Thousands and tens of thousands of officers and men belonging to foreign armies owe their lives to the Russians who hid them from the Red Army, often giving them their last piece of food and the clothes they stood up in. . . ."

After describing the German treatment of his countrymen "Mr. Morelli" continued: "I do not think I am mistaken when I say that the reason for the German-Italian break was due to the German policy in Russia."

COSSACK AND GERMAN POLITICS

FOR MANY YEARS prior to "Operation Barbarossa" there had been a group of Cossacks with their headquarters in Prague, who advocated, following the liberation of Russia, the formation of a "Greater Cossackia." Led by General Glazkov, this group based its claim for the establishment of an independent Cossack State on the entirely false premise that the Cossacks represent an ethnic or national minority within the confines of Russia.

The truth is that the Cossacks were and are Russians, who in 1444 elected to be free men rather than accept serfdom, and it was as Russians that the Cossacks explored, subjugated, and presented to the Romanov dynasty the wealth and expanse of Siberia. It was as Russians that the Cossacks were among the first to colonize Alaska and what is now known as California. In fact, had it not been for the eleven Cossack *voiskos*,[1] situated in all parts of the empire, numerous foreign invaders would have cut large slices out of the current Russian land mass.

When asked to comment about Glazkov's claim,

[1] *Voiskos*—regions.

General Peter N. Krasnov replied: "The Cossacks! Are they an exclusive nationality? Perhaps a distinct tribe? No, they are Russians who possess their own traditions.

"The Cossacks came from all parts of Russia and later formed armed bands who united under Yermak.[2] On foot, on horseback, in the sky, and in boats, the Siberian and all the other members of the Cossackhood have continually defended the frontiers of Russia...."

However, due to Hitler's policy of divide and rule plus the plans of the notorious Alfred Rosenberg to divide Russia up into quasi-national states dependent upon the Third Reich, the Glazkov "Separatists" were given every opportunity to spread their pernicious propaganda inside territories occupied by the Wehrmacht. And it was this policy that allowed Stalin to broadcast to the Russian people asking them to fight, not for him or Communism, but to defend Mother Russia from an enemy who was intent upon destroying her.

In 1942, when many Cossack units had been formed on the Eastern front by individual army commanders, the Rosenberg Eastern Ministry created a *Leitstelle,*[3] with its headquarters in Berlin, to direct and influence the Cossacks.

Primarily the Leitstelle was under the direction

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[2] In the sixteenth century and during the reign of Tsar Ivan the Terrible.

[3] *Leitstelle*—Central Office.

of Dr. N. Himpel, a German educated in Petrograd,[4] who not only spoke Russian like a native but also understood the Cossack mentality. Yet these obvious advantages were nullified by Rosenberg's order that under no circumstances were the Cossacks to be classed as Russians.

If anything the Leitstelle did great harm both to the German and to the Free Russian cause, because it continued, with all the forces at its disposal, to sponsor Separatism. Only one thing can be said in its favor. Its representatives visited the numerous death camps where Russian POW's were held and issued Cossack certificates to those prisoners who wished to fight against Communism and could prove that they were indeed bona fide Cossacks.

As the war dragged on Dr. Himpel realized that Glazkov was a political pygmy when compared to General Krasnov, and that the latter was the only man capable of uniting all the Cossacks under one banner. That assessment was correct.

Peter Nikolaievitch Krasnov was born in 1869 into a Don Cossack family whose military traditions went back many generations. Therefore it was not surprising that, like his forefathers and all the Cossacks, he was given a military education and later joined a Guards Cavalry Regiment.

He volunteered to go to the front during the Russo-Japanese War[5] and became the war corre-

[4] Formerly St. Petersburg and now Leningrad.

[5] 1904.

spondent for the *Russian Invalide,* a magazine devoted to military topics. His literary ability, later to become world-famous, did not pass unnoticed even at that stage. Tsar Nicholas II complimented him upon his descriptive and accurate reporting, and it was this encouragement that was to sustain him during later years.

Immediately prior to World War I, Krasnov commanded with distinction the First Siberian Cossack Regiment guarding the Russo-Chinese frontier, and during the war he was decorated for his prowess with the highest award of the Russian Imperial Army, the Order of St. George the Victor, and was given command of a cavalry corps.

When the Communists seized power in 1917, Major General P. N. Krasnov started to organize the Cossacks in southern Russia for armed struggle against the forces of Lenin and Trotsky. In 1918 he was elected Ataman of the Don, and issued this instruction to the entire Cossackhood, "Cherish your Great and Glorious Homeland—the Quiet Don and our Mother Russia."

He fought against the Red Army until any further resistance was futile, and then General Krasnov went into exile with millions of other faithful Russians who preferred to wander abroad as strangers rather than submit to Communism. First he went to France, where he wrote many of his books, which have been translated into all the European lan-

guages; the best known being, undoubtedly, *From Double-Headed Eagle to Red Flag.*

Anyone who has read Krasnov's work will know that every page is inspired by love and admiration for Russia's history and contains a deep and constant hatred of his country's enslavers.

In 1930 he left France and moved to a house just outside Berlin, and he was still living there when the German-Soviet War broke out. It was to that house that Dr. Himpel went to see if the General would accept a position in the Leitstelle. At first Krasnov was not interested, both because of its predominating Separatist influence and because of the condition laid down by Hitler and Rosenberg that the Cossacks should not mingle in Russian national affairs but confine themselves to the Cossackhood. What later made him change his mind was the large number of friends who begged him to accept, so that he could counter and defeat Glazkov's Separatist influence, both in Germany and in the military units.

On January 25, 1943, General Krasnov joined the Leitstelle, and two days later he wrote, at the request of the German High Command, an appeal to the Cossacks, which was subsequently spread throughout the Cossack regions. In it he fulfilled Rosenberg's order and did not devote even a single word to Russia. Instead he gave an historical outline of the Cossack character and demanded that

the Cossacks fight so that in future they could live according to their own customs.

From that date onward it appeared that Krasnov had accepted Separatism, but all the time he tried to limit the spreading of viciously anti-Russian Glazkov materials which equated the Russian people with Communism and blamed them for the horrors which were symbolic of the Soviet regime, and in this field he slowly gained ground. His real motives for pretending to accept Separatism he confided to Colonel Tiashelnikov in 1944. He played along with Rosenberg in the hope that, once the Cossack regions were independent, they could be used as a launching site for a unified Russian Liberation Movement.

Throughout this period of the war he only once allowed his real opinion to be made generally known, and that was in an article published in the Paris *Herald* in 1943 in which he criticized "Soviet Patriotism"—the theory that as the Germans were anti-Russian, the Russian emigration must defend the Soviet Union even though it, the emigration, remained fundamentally anti-Communist—which was becoming widely accepted among *émigrés* in France.

Following a declaration by the Chief of Staff of the Supreme High Command, Field Marshal Keitel, and Alfred Rosenberg, on November 10, 1943, General Krasnov found his task of combating Separatism immeasurably increased. For the declaration acknowledged "Cossackia" as an "independent nation"

and guaranteed that, following a German victory, the state would be established without any delay. Until the day of victory, the Germans agreed to respect all the traditions of the Cossackhood and to resettle all those Cossack families who had retreated earlier that year, together with the Wehrmacht, in eastern Europe and cater for their welfare until they could return home to "Cossackia."

Then, four months later, on March 31, 1944, the Separatists' influence began to wane. The director of Rosenberg's Political Department, Dr. Leibbrandt, was dismissed and, as a result of efforts made by Dr. Himpel, the commanding officer of all Russian troops fighting with the Germans issued this order:

By the General of the Volunteer Troops

The organization of the Central Administration of the Cossack Troops has been duly authorized.

The Central Administration has been organized for the purpose of representing the Cossacks and for safeguarding their interests. It will consist of the following people:

General P. Krasnov, Head of the Administration
General V. Naumenko
Colonel S. Pavlov
Colonel N. Kulakov

(Signed) KOESTRING,
General of the Cavalry

March 31st, 1944

As a result such newspapers as *On the Cossack Post, Cossack Reports, Cossack Leaflet,* to mention but a few, began to supercede Separatist publications but even so none of them dared to talk about

a free Russia or hint that the Cossacks were only a part of the Russian nation struggling for freedom.

Then, through the untiring efforts of Krasnov and his German friends, the Separatists were prohibited from circulating their propaganda among the Cossack units and Cossack *émigrés*. This, however, was not a total victory, because the Germans refused to ban the publication of Separatist periodicals and that created a curious position. It meant that the German Government, which refused to tolerate political opposition to the Nazi party, continued to sponsor, if in a somewhat curtailed fashion, a Cossack political opposition. The only explanation of this anomaly is that it was the application of the "divide and rule" policy that Hitler maintained even in the higher echelons of the Nazi hierarchy.

All this reached a new climax when, in July, 1944, the Separatist leader General Glazkov went to Berlin to meet General Krasnov and, with the support of certain important German functionaries, demanded that the Central Cossack Administration accept certain new working conditions. This presented yet another complex situation. The Central Cossack Administration had been accepted as the official Cossack representation by the Germans, and five months later they brought pressure to bear upon Krasnov to reach a compromise with Glazkov.

The outcome of the meeting was that the Central Administration ceased to exist and was replaced by

the Cossack Government in which, to comply with Rosenberg's demands, the Separatists were given three "Ministries"; those of propaganda, of foreign, and of home affairs. Krasnov remained the Supreme Ataman or President, but Glazkov insured that this position was purely a nominal one.

This decision was announced by General Krasnov in his Order No. 8, dated August 2, 1944, and the three new "Ministers" were summoned to Berlin to take over their duties.

When the content of Order No. 8 became genrally known, tremors of revolt echoed wherever Cossacks were to be found. Petitions were compiled and sent to General Krasnov, asking him not to implement the Order until the wishes of the majority of the Cossacks could be ascertained. Among those who refused to accept the Order were General Semen Nikolaievitch Krasnov, nephew of the Supreme Ataman, and Dr. Himpel, and they eventually won.

Glazkov made many hurried trips to Berlin to try to salvage even a little power for his supporters. It was all in vain. The Supreme Ataman issued Order No. 9 on August 29, 1944, which annulled the previous order and prevented the Separatists from mingling in Cossack affairs.

No sooner had this controversy died down than a new one took its place. The rank and file could not understand why Krasnov refused to join the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of

Russia,[6] which was founded in Prague on November 14, 1944, by a former hero of the Red Army, the defender of Kiev and Moscow, Lieutenant General Andrei A. Vlasov.

Krasnov had his reasons. As a proud patriot and a very religious man, he could not bring himself to accept Vlasov's plan to separate the Church from the State. To him the two were indivisible. He was also very dubious about the number of anti-Stalin Marxists who surrounded Vlasov and appeared to be dictating the KONR's policy for a liberated Russia.

The two men, Vlasov and Krasnov, met and tried to thrash out their differences on December 7 and 9, 1944, but the gulf between them was too large to be bridged. Krasnov preferred to preserve the Cossack lands as a part of a future Russia in which the age-old customs of the nation would live and flourish, because he was sure that eventually all Russia would adopt the same principles.

To quiet the rumors that were circulating and to tell his people why he had adopted his stand, Krasnov published an "Open Letter" to Vlasov on March 15, 1945, after he had joined the Cossacks in northern Italy. In the letter he laid emphasis on the fact that the Germans had already acknowledged the complete independence of the Cossack territory, and he asked if Vlasov could also guarantee this. Later, in the same letter, he implied that following

[6] Known by its Russian initials KONR.

the liberation of Russia and the establishment of a KONR Government, the Nazis would continue to treat the KONR as a German puppet without any real authority, whereas the Cossacks knew they would never accept a vassal state.

Right up to the very end of the war Krasnov held the same views. On the other hand, General Domanov, Field Ataman of all the Cossacks in northern Italy, known as the "Cossack Land," disagreed with him. He felt that all free Russians should join the KONR so that it could present a unified front to the Western Allies when the war was over.

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe not very far away, many agreed with Domanov, who then took steps to deprive Krasnov of any authority. Seeing that he only represented a minority, General Krasnov relinquished his position of Supreme Ataman and in the last issue of the newspaper *Cossack Land,* printed in Tolmezzo, northern Italy, dated April 26, 1945, Field Ataman Domanov announced that he had decided that the Cossack Land should join the ranks of the KONR. It was a pyrrhic gesture. The very next day the Cossacks started to trek northwest to meet the forces of the Western democracies.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TREK OF THE LITTLE NATION

THE FLIGHT of the Cossacks is one of the most remarkable feats of endurance known to modern history. Very few of those who left their homelands rather than submit to Communist rule again thought that, by the autumn of 1944, a year and a half later, they would have walked westward first to Kherson, then northwest to an area around Baranowicze and Nowogrodek in Poland, and then southwest, across the Alps, to Tolmezzo in northern Italy.

Like many of the Cossacks, the Germans did not see their withdrawal in the winter of 1942-43 as permanent and therefore they made plans for the Cossack families to be resettled, for the short period until they could return home, in Kamenets Podolsk near the Ukraine-Polish frontier. However, when the awaited spring offensive did not achieve the momentum all had envisaged, this plan was altered and the trek had to wend its way northwest to Nowogrodek, where the land was shared out into areas to house the respective Cossack voiskos.

Yet, not all those who started from the Don, Kuban, Terek, and Astrakhan reached the first camping site in northeastern Poland in the autumn of

1943. They were forced to suffer many privations because the Germans, fighting to save their own lives, lost all interest in them.

Some fell by the roadside unable to take another step, and others were killed in the continual air raids, when the Red Air Force showed no qualms about bombing and machine gunning the column of refugees. In addition to those hazards they were submitted, for a time, to attacks from regular Red Army units and also from Red partisan bands. And it was entirely due to the organizing and military abilities of the former construction engineer Colonel S. Pavlov and his troops that at least a hundred thousand people reached the haven of Nowogrodek.

Upon their arrival the newcomers built and decorated a beautiful church, opened schools for the children, and organized a hospital service. The Germans, still represented by one liaison officer, Captain Mueller, gave them food and then left them to their own devices. This meant that a heavy load fell upon the shoulders of Colonel Pavlov. He was a tower of strength. A man who, despite everything, maintained and infected others with the firm belief that all of them would one day return home to a liberated Russia.

While this was happening Colonel von Pannwitz received orders to re-form various Cossack units in Kherson and use them to defend the Crimea. The nucleus of this force, which came into being in the spring of 1943, was two Kuban regiments under the

leadership of the indomitable Colonel Kulakov. Soon they were reinforced by regiments from the Don and the Terek, but they were not at Kherson for long. New orders arrived. The Cossacks were to be transferred to a new training ground at Mlava in northern Poland, where the newly promoted Lieutenant General Helmuth von Pannwitz was ordered to form a Cossack Division.

Colonel Pavlov's units were ordered to join the new division at Mlava, together with all the men of military age who had been with the "trek of the little nation." Other formations arrived at odd intervals, but by no means were all the Cossacks serving on the Eastern front subordinated to von Pannwitz.

Not long after their arrival, the Six Hundredth Cossack Battalion of Colonel Kononov was sent to Mlava to become the Fifth Don Regiment. And the Fifth still remained the exception to the rule, in as much that Kononov remained its commander. The other regiments were all commanded by a German but had Cossack junior officers.

Faced with the immense task of welding all the Cossacks into a cohesive division, von Pannwitz proved himself to be unique among the German officer corps. First he decided that he must be in a position to talk to his men in their own language and without an interpreter. He quickly mastered the Russian language. Then he studied the history

and traditions of the Cossackhood, so that he could become truly one of them.

His second task was to find German officers who would take the trouble to understand the men they were going to command, instead of regarding them as "subhumans" or expendable forces in a gigantic chess game played by Hitler and Stalin. This was not easy, because many of the officers posted to Mlava considered their new assignment as a punishment, that it was a disgrace for them to be asked to lead members of the Slavonic race; and this attitude, instead of breeding the atmosphere of confidence and discipline that von Pannwitz wanted, undermined the division's morale.

The men von Pannwitz eventually surrounded himself with were former cavalry officers like himself and not products of the Nazi era intoxicated with the mythos of Aryan racial superiority. Colonels Joachim von Schultz, von Kalben, and Lehmann were but three of the senior officers who knew what their commander was trying to achieve and made every effort to understand their men. They, as a result, became the backbone of the division.

Their task was not an easy one. With the exception of the Kononov Battalion, the Cossacks who arrived at the training ground were in a terrible condition. They had been forced to gather their arms from the battlefield and capture what supplies they could from partisans and the Red Army. Men of all ages rode side by side, and it was not

unusual to find that grandfather, father, and son were comrades in arms.

To make matters worse, the newcomers' *esprit de corps* was nonexistent. They had no ideals and little faith in the future. When they wanted to supplement their military diet, they had no compunction about raiding nearby farms for chickens, pigs, or any other delicacy. According to their reasoning, they had lost everything and therefore those more fortunate, the local farmers, should not begrudge them a few extras.

Night and day von Pannwitz worked with his men. He got rid of those officers who treated the Cossacks like German recruits, because it was not his intention to model them into German soldiers. Instead he wanted to take the best features of both and create a new and efficient fighting machine. As a good soldier, he knew that the only way he could succeed was not to make his men fear him but to win their respect.

Again he ignored the official Nazi line and invited old Tsarist Cossack officers to Mlava to help him. It was a clever psychological move. The old *émigrés,* steeped in the traditions and glory of the Cossackhood, injected their pride into those whose knowledge had been tempered by years of Soviet miseducation.

To stimulate patriotism, the General formed a mounted divisional band with a drummer riding on a gleaming white horse, and this was used when

he held a march past of the cavalry or *plastuns.*[1] In addition he lavished praise wherever it was due and made a point of always being available to greet the men upon their return from exercises.

Before long von Pannwitz' methods were reaping a harvest. With his reliable German officers in leading positions and with junior officers who had been in the Russian Imperial Army, in the Red Army, or promoted to commissioned rank by local Atamans in the early days when sotnias were developed locally, the Cossacks drilled willingly, knowing that before long they could hit back at the Communists.

Although a Protestant by religious profession, von Pannwitz loved the rich mysticism of the Russian Orthodox Church and took part in all the religious ceremonies. At the Easter celebrations he proved that he was really one of them and worthy of the title they had given him of "Batka," for he exchanged Easter kisses with all the men he met. The attitude which captured the heart of his men is recalled by one of his officers, Colonel von Schultz.

The General was walking back after bathing in a nearby river when a gnarled and gray-haired old Cossack approached him. "My general, I am in the Kuban Regiment," he said slowly in a mixture of pigeon German and Russian, "and my son is in the Don Regiment. Could we be together, General?"

"*Khorosho,*"[2] replied von Pannwitz. "As from

[1] *Plastun*—a unit of Cossack infantry.
[2] *Khorosho*—good.

now, you too will be in the Don Regiment with your son. Go and tell your officers that I have ordered it."

Yet it was his comradeship and desire to understand the brave horsemen of the steppe that made other German generals ridicule him. They could not fathom why he, an officer of the Wehrmacht, should pander to the "subhumans." Their ridicule backfired at the end of the war. Their men, German soldiers, deserted in large numbers and refused to obey orders, but the Cossacks remained loyal to Batka von Pannwitz until death temporarily parted them.

Not far from the main camp was Camp Mokhovo, which housed the Cossack Reserve Regiment and some of the men's families, and the General frequently visited it to mingle with the Cossack youths who had special quarters at one end of Mokhovo.

Upon the request of individual Atamans, the boys between ten and sixteen years of age were organized into youth formations, and carefully selected teachers gave them instruction, not only in the art of war —the life motive of the Cossacks—but in religion and the history of their forefathers. Boys between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years were in other formations, where military tactics played a more important role. On these boys' eighteenth birthdays, or name-days, they were automatically transferred into the division as fully trained soldiers.

To all intents and purposes, Camp Mokhovo was

a typical stanitza, and one had only to close one's eyes to imagine that it was built on the banks of the Don, the Kuban, or Terek rivers. On a little, pine-tree-decorated hill near the entrance to the camp, the men of the Reserve Regiment had built a beautiful little church, complete with a shining cupola. The women played their part, too, and had made an exquisite altarcloth, and a soldier-artist had painted an icon of Our Lady of Kazan that had always at least two candles burning before it.

On the parade ground at Mokhovo a famous horseman instructed the youngsters in the art of the *dzhigits*,[3] and with little or no encouragement his best pupils would display their skill to the General or anyone who would stand and look.

At the training ground the division rapidly reached a peak of efficiency that would be the object of admiration in any army. The artillery had practiced until the accuracy of the guns was without parallel; the plastuns, or infantry, had incorporated into their fighting technique all that the Wehrmacht had learned in the previous campaigns, and the machine gunners and grenade-throwing units were all ready for action.

Then von Pannwitz received orders from the

[3] *Dzhigitovka*—the Cossack art of standing on a galloping horse's back and shooting accurately; frequently at objects thrown into the air by their instructor. The art of hanging from the stirrups and picking up objects from the ground; doing all sorts of acrobatics on horseback while the *pièce de résistance* is the formation of a human pyramid on the backs of galloping horses.

German High Command. The division was to proceed to the Eastern front and take over a hard-pressed sector. Thinking of his men, the General went to headquarters and asked that the order be rescinded. He pointed out that it would be ridiculous to ask the Cossacks to fight against their own countrymen by themselves and stressed the dangers that awaited them if they were captured by the Soviets. He also used that opportunity to outline his original plan of forming a real Russian Liberation Army, into which the Cossack Division could be incorporated. When that plan had been implemented, von Pannwitz said, it would be possible to use the entire army against the Soviets, because it would be representative of the entire Russian resistance movement and not, like his division, simply a segment of the population.

He knew that his plan would be unacceptable to Hitler and therefore he suggested, to prove that his men were not cowards, that instead of being sent to the Eastern front the division be sent to fight against Tito's Communist partisans in Yugoslavia until a Russian Liberation Army became a reality.

In September, 1943, the order arrived at Mlava for the division to make preparations to move, via Hungary, to Yugoslavia. General von Pannwitz had secured his men's safety, but that still left him with a grave problem; how to break the news to the men who were bubbling with enthusiasm at the prospect

of going into action against the Red Army without considering the consequences.

He had a brain wave. He asked two heroes of the Civil War, the Don and Kuban Atamans, Generals Peter N. Krasnov and V. Naumenko, to visit the division and explain why it was being sent to Yugoslavia.

It was a bright summer's day, early in September, when General Krasnov arrived at Mlava. General von Pannwitz and an Orthodox priest met him at the main gates. Krasnov sat in a carriage wearing the Tsarist uniform of a Cossack general and drove down crowded lanes of cheering Cossacks, von Pannwitz beside him. Behind them was the latter's personal bodyguard squadron, which he had loaned to the Don Ataman for the period of his visit, and behind them were four squadrons picked from the young Cossack formations at Camp Mokhovo.

Most of the men who formed the cheering lines on either side of the procession were wearing their best uniforms. They created a colorful impression, the Don, Kuban, Terek, and Siberian Cossacks with red, blue, and yellow stripes down the sides of their trousers legs and with their *papkhas* or *kubankas* on their heads.

When Ataman Krasnov arrived at the parade ground, in front of the commandant's office, the mounted band played the Russian national anthem and the "Bodyguard Cossacks' March" as he descended from the carriage. He walked to the front

of the office, where he, von Pannwitz, and his staff all knelt while a priest blessed them.

It was a time for general rejoicing. There was a march past of the entire division, the Reserve Regiment and the young Cossacks, and all of them wore their dress uniforms as opposed to their drab but serviceable battle kit. The young dzhigits performed and were complimented and cheered. Then Krasnov spoke to them all. He told them that they were going to Yugoslavia to fight against Communism, and so dominant was his personality and so deeply was he respected by the Cossacks, for he was a legend in all the voiskos, that they cheered the news instead of being resentful.

To General Krasnov, it was the happiest time of his closing life. He was at home again among his own people, and it was while he was in Mlava that he grew to love von Pannwitz as a son.

The same reception was accorded to General Naumenko, for he, like Krasnov, was a living legend, a man who throughout the years has never accepted the permanency of Communism.

With the visits and festivities over, training and preparations for the departure went ahead smoothly. When the first detachment was ready to embark into the waiting trains, the General called assembly and said in Russian, "Our hour has come! Our struggle is to destroy Communism once and for all time, and as a result achieve the freedom of the Cossack lands." As he spoke the rain poured down,

lashing into all their faces, but it could not dampen the burst of cheering that punctuated the end of his speech. The order of the day was then read out, and the First Don Regiment was the first to march out to the railroad. A priest blessed each company as they swept by.

After that the departures went on night and day. The horses were put into freight cars with Cossacks detailed to cater for their needs throughout the journey. Artillery was lashed onto open freight cars and covered with tarpaulins, and bit by bit the training ground at Mlava became an empty shell.

Irrespective of the time of day or night his men left, von Pannwitz was there to wish them Godspeed and promised to join them at their new quarters in Yugoslavia in the near future. And then it was his turn to say farewell.

Together with his personal staff and the squadron of bodyguard, he went to Camp Mokhovo.

As they approached the camp gates the sentry, wearing his *burka,*[4] stood to attention with his sword drawn in salute. A trumpeter sounded the alert, and the General entered to inspect the Reserve Regiment lined up and awaiting his arrival.

With the inspection completed, he took leave of them and their families. *"Do svidaniya moyi dorogie Kozaki"* (Good-bye, my dear Cossacks). Those were his last words, and the people shouted back, at the

[4] *Burka*—a felt cloak worn by Caucasian, Terek, and Kuban Cossacks.

tops of their voices, *"Do svidaniya, Gospodin General"* (Good-bye, General).

Then he went to see the youngsters in their section of the camp. He said good-bye to them, and his bright blue eyes were misty as he spoke. When he had finished, all vestiges of discipline vanished. The boys besieged him. All wanted to shake his hand. Some of the older boys begged for permission to go with him, but he refused, promising that he would be pleased to see them as soon as they were eighteen years old and came to join the division.

Next he said farewell to his adopted son, an orphan he had met while at Kherson, who cried bitterly at the thought of being parted from his foster father, and not even the promise that he would soon be able to join him in Yugoslavia could stem his tears.

Walking back with the camp Ataman, men, women, and children approached him to have a last personal word. Finally the camp priest led him to the little church among the pine trees. The two of them entered alone, and the priest asked him to remain in the middle of the floor.

Hundreds of candles flickered and glittered, casting a mellow glow onto mounds of flowers. Von Pannwitz knelt and bent his graying head. The priest blessed him. "May Our Lord protect you and your men and lead you and all the Cossack people to freedom." The camp choir burst into song, and before he left the church von Pannwitz, in keeping with tradition, kissed the cross the priest held out.

Throughout this period at Mlava, the Cossacks living in Nowogrodek were in constant touch with General von Pannwitz, and under the command of the Campaign Ataman Colonel Pavlov they lived and patiently waited for the day when the division would join the Germans in the front line and drive the Soviets back from their homelands.

They tended their cattle; some tilled the land to eke out their rations. The schools were full, the churches always filled to capacity at every service, and the Germans left them to live their own lives.

However, it was not an idyllic existence. So far from their native soil, they had the feeling of being lost and alone and they did not mix with the local inhabitants with whom they had nothing in common. To add to their worries, the Germans, instead of advancing in the East, continued to retreat and with their withdrawal came the hazards of attacks from armed Red partisans.

The Wehrmacht could do nothing to help Colonel Pavlov in warding off the partisans. They were being kept too busy elsewhere. Yet this did not alarm Pavlov. In fact he preferred to be left alone to solve his own problems.

He formed special guard units and antipartisan detachments, armed with captured Soviet weapons. It was not long after their formation that the partisans were forced to stop their forays and resume a defense position, because the Pavlov troops were anxious to get to grips with the hated enemy.

Then, on June 17, 1944, a bitter tragedy was to strike the encampment of the "Little Nation." Ataman Colonel Pavlov was killed under what remain very mysterious circumstances.

There are three versions of his death. One, that he was shot by mistake by an overvigilant sentry as he was checking security posts. The second version is that he was shot by Soviet partisans while making a reconnaissance outside the perimeter of the camp. And, thirdly, that one of the Cossacks was in reality a Soviet agent who shot him from ambush to deprive the Cossacks of a beloved leader and to show them that the Soviets were so powerful they could reach any victim they chose. Just what really happened is a matter for conjecture, but it was a great loss.

Following Pavlov's death, the Don Colonel T. I. Domanov was made Campaign Ataman. Under any circumstances Pavlov's successor would have faced an immense task, but Domanov was not the man for the job.

Before the war he had been a teacher and represented an unknown and untested quantity. He was a man who obviously had no military bearing or education and was devoid of any military skill or organizing ability. Until the time of his appointment, he had played an insignificant role in the movement; he was the recruiting officer for one of the regiments. His wife, on the other hand, was a woman of exceptional organizing talents, and as a

Russian-German from the Ukraine she was the only person belonging to the "Little Nation" who spoke German. It was her influence with Captain Mueller that made him appoint Domanov the Campaign Ataman.

Domanov had no opportunity to settle down and learn what must be done for the Cossacks, because a few months after he was promoted the Red Army neared the Polish frontier and he received instructions that the entire encampment was to start on yet another trek. This time southwest, across the Alps and into northern Italy.

To accommodate the Cossacks, an agreement was reached between the German and Mussolini Fascist governments for the "Little Nation" and the Cossack Reserve Regiment to be resettled in what had been a partisan-infested area around Tolmezzo.

When the convoy of carts started on the second part of its journey, it stretched for more than ten miles without a break. It had to force its way through biting winter winds, through snow, sleet, and rain. Some of the kibitkas were not pulled by horses but by camels from the Trans-Volga, and behind nearly all of them the remnants of the cattle were tied.

Everyone hated the idea of going further away from Russia, but each knew that if the advancing Red Army was to capture them they could expect no mercy. Earlier Stalin, determined to preserve his stranglehold on the nation at all costs, had de-

creed that those soldiers who were taken prisoner by the Germans, irrespective of how hard they had fought or how hopeless was their position, were to be treated as traitors to the Motherland and dealt with accordingly when they returned home.

When the "Little Nation" eventually arrived, sadly depleted in numbers, at the area set aside for them, the Cossacks discovered that German troops, under orders from the German military governor of the Trieste Province, Obergruppenfuehrer Globocnik, had previously ousted the inhabitants of the various villages whom he and the Italian Fascist Government considered to be politically unreliable. This automatically created ill-will between those Italians left in the area and the newcomers. Nor was the animosity diminished when Globocnik ordered the Cossacks to fight against the partisans.

At first the Cossack Reserve Regiment ignored that order, as they considered themselves to be merely temporary guests and accordingly the partisan struggle was nothing to do with them. It was only when they were told, with a certain degree of truth, that they would be fighting against Communists that they agreed to take action and they showed no mercy to the partisans they caught.

As at Nowogrodek, the Cossacks were housed in regions allocated to the different voiskos, but many refused to occupy the houses placed at their disposal and preferred to remain under the canvas of their kibitkas.

Until the time of his arrival in Italy, Domanov, who first had his HQ in Gemona and then Tolmezzo, had received his orders direct from the Cossack Central Administration. Afterwards he was subordinated to Obergruppenfuehrer Globocnik, who provided the Cossacks with the bare necessities of life.

One of Globocnik's first orders was that the Cossacks were to cultivate all the arable land to help feed themselves and the German troops. Again an order was disobeyed.

"How is it possible for us to cultivate the land?" the Cossacks asked each other. "We do not own the land and therefore it would be wrong if we did."

They lived in a world of fantasy. Whenever they met to discuss current events, inevitably the conversation would veer around to memories of home.

One Astrakhan Cossack who had brought his camel with him never tired of repeating how it always stood looking to the east, longing for the distant steppe that it loved.

"Last night my camel did not come home from the forest," he told his friends one day as they sat around a glowing fire. "You know he is a very proud and sensitive creature, and he won't come back because he cannot understand why I am not giving him enough to eat."

The camel, however, did return, much to his owner's delight, but it was not long before the same man, with tears streaming down his face, had to kill

his animal rather than watch it slowly starve to death.[5]

Early in 1945 a number of the old Cossack *émigrés,* those who had left Russia in 1920, joined the "Little Nation," having come mainly from Yugoslavia and from Germany. They were surprised to see how quickly their kinsmen had adapted themselves to the new conditions.

A newspaper was published in Tolmezzo which printed editions for each Cossack voisko; lectures were held at regular intervals and were always well attended, and a library, comprised of books donated by everyone who managed to bring a few volumes with them, did a thriving business. But the Church played the leading role wherever new stanitzas were formed, and the churches were amply decorated with icons painted by willing and capable artists.

Various art exhibitions were held in Tolmezzo, and there were public displays of home craftsmanship that had always played an important part in the life of stanitzas at home.

The new schools had the best possible teachers, many of them having been academicians, professors, and doctors in more peaceful times. Following the arrival of the old *émigrés* from Yugoslavia, a military academy was founded to train future Cossack officers. The cadets from this academy were later to figure prominently in the end of this saga.

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[5] These conversations were reported by Madame and Miss Tiashelnikov, who were present.

THE FIFTEENTH COSSACK CAVALRY CORPS

THE TRAINS full of men of the Cossack Division sped through the glorious September days via Warsaw, Czechoslovakia, and down into Yugoslavia, where the division took up positions near Belgrade. Although he did not realize it at the time, Tito had already lost the first round of the fight by allowing the division to reach the area around Ruma. Had he been the clever tactician portrayed by Western propaganda press releases, he would have arranged for the trains to sabotaged before they arrived at their destinations.

It was not long before the Cossacks were reveling in skirmishes with their Red enemy. The mountainous terrain suited their particular style of warfare, and in Croatia it virtually became a war between them and the Tito partisans. To the south, in Serbia, the Tito men had to face equally ardent fighters: the Chetniks of General Mihailovitch and the "Russian Defense Corps."[1]

[1] The "Russian Defense Corps" was formed in Belgrade to protect the large number of Russians—many of whom were Cossacks who had left their homeland at the end of the Civil War in 1920—from barbarous attacks made by Yugoslav Communist forces.

At first the war in Croatia was limited to patrols and ambushes. It was not until November, 1943, that the battle was joined in earnest, and then the losses on both sides were heavy; but in a short time vast tracts of lands that had formerly been under Tito's control were liberated by the division.

What brought matters to a head was the continual Red sabotaging of the railroad tracks around Srem. To stop this, the Cossacks were ordered to clear the neighborhood and secure the lines of communication and supply from future attacks. The struggle took place among the wooded slopes and dense valleys of the Frushka Gora, and it ended when the badly mauled Red guerrillas slunk away into distant hideouts.

During the campaign von Pannwitz was always quite near. If possible, he tried to greet his weary troops as they rode or marched back to their home base. For the wounded he possessed an unending supply of small presents and words of comfort, which he spoke in Russian.

When one of his units had won a particularly hard foray, the General would arrange for the divisional band, complete with red Circassian national coats and white fur hats, to go out and escort it back to the billets, while he would wait with his bodyguard at a convenient place to welcome them. This was a cause of consternation to the villagers because they would be suddenly awakened from a sound sleep, in the middle of the night, by the

blaring of the trumpeters, the sound of the drums competing with the clop of horses' hoofs, and the shouts of "Hoorah" as the tired soldiers acknowledged Batka von Pannwitz' salute.

The Siberian Cossacks were based at Sisak, where the division had its headquarters, when the news reached them that some German and Croatian formations, surrounded by a large Tito force in the villages between Glina and Sisak, were being decimated. They were ordered to break through the cordon and bring the besieged men back to safety. It was total war. Neither side took any prisoners while the fighting lasted, and although von Pannwitz and his German officers tried to curb the bloodthirsty enthusiasm of the Cossacks they were only moderately successful. The Cossacks were not fighting enemies of the German Reich. They were fighting Communists, representatives of the creed that had tried to exterminate them since November, 1917. The mere fact that their opponents were Yugoslav Communists did not diminish their fury. They saw the Red Star on the enemies' caps, and that was like a red rag to a bull.

There was not a moment's respite. Part of the division had to be diverted to relieve the ineffective Croatians guarding the railroad between Zagreb and Brod, because the Red partisans were indulging in another spate of wrecking the tracks.

Despite the heavily wooded surroundings, the Cossacks destroyed the guerrillas whenever they ap-

peared and then settled down to simple guard duty. Yet Tito was not defeated. It was not long before saboteurs managed to infiltrate the section of track guarded by the Terek regiment and derail several trains. The guards were doubled and every night some of the partisans walked into carefully laid ambushes, but the wrecking went on. General von Pannwitz realized the situation would continue until the local Red headquarters and garrison at Pakraz had been wiped out, so he told the Terek commander, "Pakraz must be cleared of all Communists without delay."

Early one morning the Terek Regiment moved out in the direction of Pakraz. The mountains were overcast and the only road they could use was more like a bog track. The horses' hoofs sank into the sodden ground, and the pack animals carrying machine guns and ammunition were soon steaming with sweat as they struggled on. To make matters worse it began to rain, but the marching columns did not falter until the advance patrol sighted the objective, Pakraz.

As quickly as possible the machine guns were unloaded and put into position. Yet the Reds were not to be caught unawares. When a group of Cossacks crawled forward through the mud, they were met with a hail of bullets from the thick undergrowth. Machine guns were brought up to retaliate, but the gunners could see nothing and had to wait until the enemy fired and then strafe

that part of the thicket. In reply the guerrillas fired grenades and mortars at the Cossacks, whose own grenade throwers were not slow to take up the challenge. This went on for some time, and then, under a heavy covering fire, the Cossacks went into the attack on foot. Hand-to-hand fighting broke out in the undergrowth and slowly the Cossacks gained the upper hand and the guerrillas began to retreat. At that psychological moment the mounted troops, kept in reserve, were launched into the battle. Screaming their age-old war cries, the Terek Cossacks burst upon the enemy, who quickly realized that all was lost and fled, abandoning Pakraz.

On this occasion quite a large number of prisoners were taken, all of them in nondescript uniforms but wearing military caps with a Red Star prominently displayed. The prisoners included a high percentage of women.

Having achieved their objective, the Cossacks set fire to everything that they knew would be of use to the enemy when it returned, and then the regiment with its dead and wounded loaded onto stretchers started back to its original position.

Tito had suffered a major defeat and lost many of his men, and yet the Terek commander knew that he would still have to face ambushes on the way back to his own lines. He was not mistaken. At an advantageous position the Reds were waiting for them.

The packhorses, the wounded, and prisoners were

in the middle of the column, and two large detachments were acting as scouts and a rearguard, when firing poured into the Cossacks. Caught without any protection, the center force was being cut to pieces, but when the van and rearguard heard the heavy firing they ignored their orders. Their commander and the wounded were in danger, so they charged headlong down the valley. They faced a wall of fire, and many fell never to rise again. It did not stop them. They were invincible. Death meant nothing to them, as it was part of their tradition that the only honorable way a Cossack could die was in battle. So they smashed home their counterattack until the Reds withdrew in chaos, and this time no prisoners were taken.

To replace his losses, von Pannwitz received volunteers who had formerly served in the Red Army. The replacements were first investigated by agents of the Cossack Leitstelle and later on by officers of the Cossack Central Administration; then, if they were thought to be reliable, they were sent to a camp at Zwettle near Vienna. At the camp they were allowed a modicum of freedom and given the opportunity to decide, without any pressure being put on them, whether they wished to remain as prisoners of war or enlist in the Cossack Division. More than 95 per cent elected to join their compatriots in Yugoslavia, and while a few of those may have been motivated by the desire to escape from the death camps it was not the general motive. Most

of them simply wanted a chance to strike back at a common enemy, Stalin and the Communists.

In February, 1944, a group of famous Cossack Ataman-Generals visited the divisional headquarters at Sisak, and their arrival was the cause of a holiday-like atmosphere.

One of the visitors was General Schkuro, a Cossack who came from the North Caucasus, and who, during the Civil War in southern Russia, formed a force numbering several hundred men to fight against the Red Army. Before long his command had reached the strength of a division, and his soldiers were called "The Wolves of Schkuro," a name bestowed upon them for two good reasons. They fought like wolverines protecting their cubs and every man wore a cap made of wolfskin. Later the division adopted the picture of a wolf's head as its insignia.

Schkuro's fame was not limited to the White anti-Communist armies. He received, in recognition of his services in the cause of freedom, a high-ranking British Order, and even the men of the Red Army admired the stocky, bluff man, who was never happier than when he was fighting or telling his men disgusting—and amusing—stories that seem to be the stock-in-trade of soldiers of all countries.

Together with what was left of his command, "Wolf" Schkuro went into exile with General Baron Peter Wrangel. First he went to Paris and spent his time planning to re-form his Wolf Division and

with it help to liberate Russia and his beloved Caucasus. As time went by and he realized that the Western World was not interested in destroying Communism, he sought refuge in bouts of heavy drinking together with those of his comrades who never left his side.

Tired of the French capital, he went to the Cossacks' second home, to Belgrade, but even there he failed to find happiness or hope, so he drank more and more. It took the German invasion of the Soviet Union to raise him from his apathy. He thought, at long last, he would soon be able to return home. Again he was to be disappointed, for as he saw how the Germans treated his fellow countrymen he knew that all was in vain. However, even that knowledge did not stop him from using the opportunity to have a final stab at the Communists.

Not long after he visited the Cossack Division at Sisak he told his aide, Captain Anatol Petrovsky, as they celebrated his fifty-sixth birthday together in Berlin, "You see, my friend Anatol, soon we shall be hanged. But the devil take them.

"In any case there is still time for me to show those Red bastards who Schkuro is. . . . Fill my glass again, Anatol, there's a good fellow."

While at Sisak and as he wandered among the men, he let none of them see the impending defeat. In rough language, interspersed with curses, he urged each and every one to fight harder than

ever and never betray the good name of the Cossackhood. The men loved him.

He was still with the division, together with General Naumenko and others, for the Easter celebrations. A field altar, decorated with flowers and pine branches, was built in a field, and on it were masses of burning candles that were constantly replenished.

The Cossacks assembled for the Easter services, for, despite their love of riotous living, they were deeply Christian. In the front row were von Pannwitz and his guests. Since it was Easter Sunday, the village bells pealed out the news that Christ had arisen from the dead, and then men forgot all about the war raging around them.

Men rushed up to von Pannwitz who said, *"Khristos Voskrese"*[2] and they replied, as loudly as they could, *"Voistinu Voskrese."*[3]

Delegates from the various regiments handed Pannwitz their gifts — hand-woven baskets full of painted eggs and small cakes. In addition the Don Cossacks presented him with a newly born white lamb as a token of their loyalty. Pannwitz thanked them individually in Russian, and gave them in return the Easter kiss on the right and left cheek. Then the group went to join the others in an Easter feast, which had been prepared in the true Cossack manner with plenty of good things to eat and an even larger amount of things to drink.

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[2] Christ is arisen.

[3] He has truly arisen.

In July, 1944, General von Pannwitz went to see the Central Administration of Eastern Units[4] to make arrangements for the division to be expanded into a Cossack Corps and at the same time to make inquiries as to why he was not receiving the arms, ammunition, and supplies that he had indented for. The fact that he could ask for the creation of a corps was solely due to the ever increasing number of Cossacks who kept requesting permission to serve under him.

The Central Administration was in favor of expanding the division, but it could not help him with the supplies that would be necessary. It pointed out that the S.S. had changed its policy; that it no longer regarded all Russians as "subhumans" and had created an S.S. Central Office to organize its own volunteer units from the East, who monopolized all the available modern equipment and supplies. This information led von Pannwitz, who was neither a Nazi nor a sympathizer of the S.S., to Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. Fritz Rudolf Arlt, because he was determined to insure that his men had the means to carry on the fight.

Their meeting was short and direct. The General told Dr. Arlt that neither he nor his Cossacks were supporters of National Socialism and had no interest in becoming members of the Waffen S.S.[5] Arlt took the news calmly, and the outcome was

[4] *Freiwillingen Leitstelle Ost.*

[5] Military S.S., as opposed to a purely political formation.

that von Pannwitz agreed that the new corps, to be known as the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps, should be subordinated to the S.S. Central Office, and in return Dr. Arlt promised that no S.S. officers or men would be posted to the corps, or would he demand that the Cossacks become members of the Waffen S.S. and wear its uniform. Arlt was prepared to make these concessions because it would increase, even if only on paper, the strength of auxiliary troops under his command and thereby bolster the flagging prestige of the S.S.

The General returned to Yugoslavia well satisfied with the results, and a second division was soon brought up to full strength. This was just in time because the war against Tito was reaching its zenith. Daily more and more supplies were reaching the guerrillas from the Western Allies and the Soviets, but the Cossacks managed to maintain their superiority even if they could no longer attempt to keep under their direct control the vast tracts of land they had dominated previously.

Two months later, on September 22, 1944, when most of the non-Nazi Germans knew that their defeat was only a matter of time, a group of fifty to sixty Soviet bombers flew over the area occupied by the corps around Virovitica on the river Drava.[6] They bombed concentrations of Cossacks and dropped leaflets calling upon the Yugoslav people to help the partisans in driving out the Ger-

[6] Drau in German.

mans. But among those leaflets were some handwritten letters addressed to the Cossack commander. They were from Red airmen, who asked that the Cossacks arrange a landing ground and put out landing lights, as they wished to join in the fight for Russia's liberation.

This news was passed along to headquarters, and Colonel Kononov was given permission to illuminate a landing strip on September 23. The fires were lit, and when the bombers came over six aircraft left the formation and landed. The crews, under Major Libedev, were escorted to Colonel Kononov, who interrogated them. When he was satisfied as to their political integrity, he allowed them to join his regiment without any further formalities.

Their arrival boosted morale, but by the end of the year the great German retreat started and, despite repeated promises from Dr. Arlt, the new weapons and supplies never arrived. The Cossacks were forced to ration their food and ammunition.

Yet it was on Christmas Day, 1944, that the Cossacks won their greatest victory of the war. On Christmas Eve, the Red One Hundred and Thirty-third "Stalin" Infantry Division, supplemented by Tito partisans and units of the Bulgarian Army, tried to force a bridgehead across the river Drava seven kilometers west-northwest of Virovitica, at a village called Pitomarca.

Prior to the Cossacks being ordered into the attack,

the Stalin Division had already beaten off and defeated repeated German and Croatian attempts to dislodge its foothold. This did not deter the three Cossack regiments, the Fourth Kuban, Sixth Terek, and the Fifth Don, who were ordered to make the first strike against a numerically superior enemy.

While the attack was officially under the command of Colonel Joachim von Schultz, the actual fighting was directed by the Don Cossack Colonel Ivan N. Kononov, who, with Schultz's permission, decided to send the Kuban Regiment against the left flank of the enemy; the Terek to the right flank, while his own Fifth Don Regiment was to launch the frontal attack.

By this time the enemy was fully prepared. Deep and semiarmored bunkers and firepoints had been constructed, and its artillery was carefully camouflaged and strategically placed. The three Cossack regiments went into the attack simultaneously, but the powerful Red artillery blasted the Fifth Don to a standstill, and the two arms of the pincer movement were pinned to the ground by heavy cross fire.

During the assault Kononov directed operations, in the midst of the fighting, by standing upright in a German-built patrol car. When he saw that the first attempt had failed; that his artillery with a limited supply of shells and the few German tanks at his disposal were unable to destroy the enemy position, he called upon Captain Orlov, one of the many former Red Army officers in the Corps, to

take a squadron of Don Cossacks and silence the Soviet batteries.

Out of sight of the enemy, Orlov attacked from the rear. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting broke out around the gun emplacements, but Orlov fulfilled his mission. Every gun was silenced and the breech blocks smashed. As soon as he noticed that the guns had stopped firing Kononov again ordered his men forward, and this time they were successful.

With sword and bayonet the Fifth Dons charged with Kononov, keeping pace with them and cheering them on. To the left and right the arms of the pincer movement began to close. Panic spread among the Stalin Division. Men began to throw away their rifles, left their machine guns, and looked for a means of escape. It was too late. The pincer had already closed and was beginning to squeeze. Only two alternatives remained for the Red soldiers —to fight or surrender, and they chose the latter. And it was not until then that most of them realized that their enemy was not a crack German unit but Russians like themselves.

At the outset of the battle the Stalin Division numbered eighteen thousand men while Kononov had exactly half that, nine thousand men. The Cossack losses were 312 dead and 602 wounded. The Reds lost four thousand dead, most of whom were drowned in the river, and the remainder surrendered. A mere handful managed to escape.

Out of those who became prisoners, 3,455 sol-

diers were sent to POW camps, and the others, at their own request, were recruited en masse into the Cossack Corps. And the Cossacks, contrary to their usual behavior toward prisoners, welcomed them as brothers.

To mark the overwhelming victory, the only time when the Cossacks as a unified and large force faced the Red Army, Colonel Kononov received the Iron Cross, First Class, as did Captain Orlov and many others who showed unparalleled heroism. Also General von Pannwitz, who was waiting to greet his victorious troops when they returned to their billets behind the line, sent a special letter to each regiment, acknowledging his pride at being associated with them in their hour of triumph.

After that the Corps used Virovitica as its operational base. It fought to prevent a breakthrough of massing Tito troops, and on more than one occasion, at Barcs and Varazhdin, defeated numerically superior Bulgarian divisions who tried to cross the Drava behind them and cut off their avenue of retreat, which everyone knew was only a matter of time.

At Varazhdin in February, 1945, the Bulgarians thought they were in an invincible position by virtue of their concentration of artillery, armor, and amassed men. They were to learn that size is indicative of nothing because the Cossack Cavalry routed them and inflicted heavy losses. And after

that the Bulgars kept a safe distance from the Cossacks and relied upon ambushing odd patrols.

By the following month, when even a supreme optimist like von Pannwitz could no longer believe in the production of devastating "secret weapons" that would insure a speedy German victory, the Corps received reinforcements. One regiment, the Three Hundred and Sixtieth known as the "Renteln" Regiment after its commander Colonel Renteln, joined it on March 29, 1945, and was incorporated into the First Division with Captain Kulgavo in command.

About the same time the "Kononov" Brigade, formed in February and which included Kononov's original Don Regiment, was enlarged into the Third Division of the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps and Colonel Renteln was appointed its commander. Then the Corps was comprised of: First Division under the command of Colonel Wagner—First Don, Second Siberian, and Fourth Kuban Regiments—Second Division under the command of Colonel von Schultz—Third Kuban, Fifth Don, and Sixth Terek Regiments—Third Division commanded by Colonel Renteln—Seventh and Eighth Plastuns and the Kononov Brigade.

In April, 1945, delegates from all the regiments in the Corps gathered in Virovitica to learn the result of the democratic election for the position of Field Ataman of the Cossackhood.

The night the announcement was to be made

they all met in the courtyard of a castle which was illuminated by hundreds of burning torches that cast dancing shadows on the ancient walls. The delegates stood beside a flower bed, and the massed choir of the Corps was grouped near the fountain in the middle of the courtyard. The mounted Cossack band, magnificent in its colorful grandeur, was in the background, and above them a calm, star-studded sky acted as a backcloth.

Not a sound was to be heard until General von Pannwitz rode into the courtyard accompanied by Generals Naumenko and Schkuro when the band played the "Preobrazhensky March."

As the senior officers mounted the decorated rostrum the band stopped playing. The kettle drums sounded the alert and were followed by a trumpet fanfare. In the ensuing silence General Schkuro stepped forward and announced in a short speech that Helmuth von Pannwitz had been duly elected as Field Ataman of all the Cossack voiskos.

Cheers blasted the castle walls as the delegates went wild with excitement. Only when they were too hoarse to cheer any more did a handful of men, acting as spokesmen for the Corps, go forward to the rostrum to pledge an oath of allegiance to the new Field Ataman.

The Corps priest blessed von Pannwitz, and the choir sang as if inspired. Later, and before the men returned to the grim reality of war, the priest asked the assembly to join him in a prayer for victory,

a prayer for the victory of the Cossacks—Germany was not mentioned—and to ask Our Lord to bless the Field Ataman with wisdom and the skill to lead them all back to their beloved Cossack lands.

By being elected as Field Ataman of the Cossackhood, von Pannwitz became a unique person in history. He was the very first man who was not born a Cossack or a member of the Russian Imperial family and most certainly the very first foreigner to receive that honor. The last Field Ataman before him being the late Tsarevitch Alexey of Russia, who was murdered together with his father, Tsar Nicholas II, and his family in Ekaterinburg in 1918.

Following his election and as he saw the streams of defeated German soldiers straggling back toward Germany, von Pannwitz again placed his men before the needs of his own country. He sent Ivan Kononov, promoted to the rank of Major General on April 1, 1945, to inform General Vlasov, who was with his First KONR[7] Division near Prague, that he was placing the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps, numbering seventy thousand men, under the KONR's jurisdiction and under General Vlasov's personal control. His reason for making this decision was not based upon any desire to shelve his responsibility in the rapidly approaching catastrophe but to try to give the Corps a political status; to prove to the West that they were not German

[7] KONR—The Russian initials of the "Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia," acknowledged as a government-in-exile.

hirelings, as the Soviets were bound to claim, but loyal anti-Communist Cossacks, who fought only for Mother Russia.

The reason he chose to send General Kononov to see Vlasov was a cause for discussion at the time, and the controversy still rages today. The German officers attached to the Corps believe that von Pannwitz wanted to get rid of Kononov for a short period because he had become too ambitious and therefore a danger. However, this premise is fraught with loopholes.

If the Field Ataman had wanted to check Kononov's alleged ambitions, he would not have sent him to see the Supreme Commander of the Free Russian forces, General Vlasov, as the two men had met earlier in the war and Kononov might well have used their earlier acquaintanceship to obtain a senior position in the KONR Army. Secondly, it must be taken into consideration that Kononov had no love for the Germans, with the exception of von Pannwitz, because of the way they had treated Russia and, as he had always been forced to serve, irrespective of his military qualifications, under German officers of the same or a lower rank.

When Kononov met Vlasov in April, 1945, the tall, gawky Free Russian commander lacked the luster and confidence he had exuded previously, during the years he had struggled to obtain German sanction for the creation of an active "Russian Lib-

eration Army."[8] After Kononov told him that the Cossack Corps wished to join the KONR Army, all he could say was, "Too late, too late."

Later during the meeting the question of German officers serving with Russian units was discussed. For Vlasov, like Kononov, was anxious to get rid of them. Not because he felt any personal animosity toward them, but he thought it would be better if the Free Russians had little or no links with the Wehrmacht when they surrendered to the Western Allies. And to supplement that viewpoint, Kononov was made commander of the Cossack Corps, and on May 5, 1945, was appointed commander of all Cossack troops.

Neither appointment meant anything, and Kononov, perhaps fortunately, never had the opportunity to unify or assume a position of leadership.[9] Instead, when the German Reich surrendered he went underground with his aide to escape the inevitable, the Red agents who combed Europe looking for him and other leading anti-Communist Russians so that they could be taken back to the U.S.S.R. and executed.

Using a stream of false names, a new one almost daily, Ivan Kononov and his aide eluded the Soviet headhunters and today both of them live in Aus-

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[8] "Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Armia," which was better known by its Russian initials ROA.

[9] The word "fortunately" has to be applied because it is doubtful if the men of the Corps, as much as they may have admired Kononov, would have tolerated the loss of their beloved Batka Pannwitz, whom they did not consider to be a German but one of themselves.

tralia. But while all this was going on near Prague, von Pannwitz was trying to save his Corps, which then numbered seventy-two thousand men. Without any supplies, having to fight and capture food and ammunition from the enemy, he ordered the Cossacks to retreat toward Austria.

Scattered as his units were—only the First Division under Colonel Wagner was more or less intact—he kept in close contact with them and tried, wherever possible, to send relief forces to those who were in danger of capture by Titoist and Bulgarian troops. They were the only troops left in Croatia capable of offering continued resistance. The once vaunted Wehrmacht had virtually ceased to exist. In its place a demoralized horde lumbered westward, bound together by common bonds of safety rather than the iron discipline of the parade ground. Any stragglers were quickly rounded up by the Reds and tortured to death, their mutilated carcasses placed in prominent positions so their comrades could see what awaited them if they should fall into Communist hands.

At the town of Celje, the First Division found that its route westward was blocked on the opposite side of the river Drava by a strong Bulgarian-Tito concentration. Determined to go on and without any ammunition, the Cossacks charged the other bank. Many were drowned or killed crossing the river as they stormed in a frontal attack, but again the enemy was not prepared to meet those who

got across in hand-to-hand fighting and the division broke through.

The Second Division had a harder task. It had to fight its way, step by step, from Varazhdin and, although it had no food or ammunition, it refused to consider the repeated offers to surrender to Tito's guerrillas.

It was at this juncture that von Pannwitz sent four of his trusted officers, including cavalry captain the Duke of Schwarzenberg to contact the British in Austria and explain that the Corps was not comprised of mercenaries, but was the nucleus of a future army which the West would need when it came to blows with its Soviet ally.

The thesis which he urged the mediators to stress was that "the struggle against Communism was only just beginning for the West and that the Cossack Corps must be preserved as a future weapon even if it had to be temporarily dispersed." After their departure von Pannwitz never heard of the four men again, and therefore did not know what type of reception awaited his men in Western captivity.

Then the blow fell. On May 8, 1945, while the fighting was still at its height as far as the Cossacks were concerned, the Field Ataman received a message from a Red colonel of the Eighth Yugoslav Partisan Army, informing him that Germany had surrendered unconditionally and that as from 11:00 P.M. that same night all movements of German troops were forbidden and they were to surrender

to the nearest Allied army. Half an hour after receiving the news, he received confirmation from the German Supreme Command.

Knowing what it would mean to his men if they surrendered to Tito, he issued one of his last orders: All regiments of the Corps were to ignore demands to lay down their arms and were to fight their way westward until they made contact with the British.

All the roads were clogged with refugees and Hungarian, Croatian, and German troops who had accepted the dictate to remain in their exact positions at the time of the surrender. The Cossacks dispersed them and carved a way through, having to fight for every step. It was only when he knew that the First Division was near the British lines that the Field Ataman left his headquarters, not to desert them as some of his fellow countrymen were doing, but to meet the nearest British commander and make arrangements for his Corps to be received.

In the morning of May 9, 1945, he was met by a reconnaissance unit of the Eleventh British Armored Division and escorted to its HQ. Later that day the First Division arrived inside the British demarcation lines near Griffen. It rested for a few hours, then still armed rode deeper into Austria, aghast at the devastation passed along the way.

The division was riding slowly along the road between Lavamund and Volkermarkt the next morning, May 10, when a small convoy of British cars broke through the dense mass of human flotsam in

front of it and came toward the Cossacks. In the first car, together with some British officers, was Batka von Pannwitz.

Like a streak of lightning the news swept along the columns, dispelling the lethargy caused by continual fighting, lack of sleep and food. As the convoy drew in to the side of the road and stopped, officers rode among the men repeating, "First Cossack Division on parade."

The wagons were unhitched and the packhorses quartered. The band rode up and took station behind von Pannwitz and the British officers, who were amazed at this display. Then, in columns of four, the regiments filed past their commander. There was no sign of weariness or defeat in the men's faces. They looked happy and were proud to show the people from the West that they were not the rabble the Communists claimed them to be.

When the parade was over the division was ordered to continue to the east of Volkermarkt, where it would surrender its arms, the officers keeping theirs. From there it was directed to an area stretching from Feldkirken to Althofen, where the men were billeted in villages or in bivouacs.

The Second Division had been forced to scatter into regiments as it fought its way westward, and it was only a comparative handful who reached the haven of southern Austria on May 12, 1945, to be disarmed and directed to billeting regions. Nor did the men have the *élan* of the First Division.

They were worried about their future, for even in Austria they had passed hundreds of their former comrades who had been captured and slain by Tito partisans, who had left the foully mutilated bodies by the roadside.

Slowly these qualms vanished, this largely due to the commander of the Eleventh British Armored Division and his officers. They kept aloof from the Cossacks, but their actions showed that they understood the predicament the Corps found itself in and its desire not to be handed over to the Communists. As evidence of this, von Pannwitz and his officers were left in entire command, and all of them were allowed freedom of movement inside defined boundaries.

At no time was there any mention that the Cossack Corps would be extradited to the U.S.S.R. and, instead of being put into mammoth POW cages like the Germans, it was hinted that at a later date the Cossacks might be temporarily interned.

Individual British officers overcame the difficult language barrier and told the Cossacks how much they sympathized with their fight for freedom. Perhaps the best friend they had in this period was the commander of an artillery regiment, Colonel Hills, who went out of his way to help them whenever he could.[10]

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[10] A former member of the Cossack Corps assures me that Colonel Hills saved many lives and that, in his younger days, he had been a member of the British Mission to General Baron Wrangel in the Crimea and learned to appreciate the full importance of the White (anti-Communist) struggle.

The Field Ataman was not inactive either. Each day he would leave his headquarters in Althofen and visit the camps where his men were, urging them to maintain discipline and not to be disheartened by their position. He also had a series of discussions with a British general about the future of the Corps, and from that senior British officer he received the assurance that not one member of the Corps would be forced to return to the U.S.S.R. against his wishes. Instead, all the Cossacks would be transported, to find a new and free life either in Canada or Australia.

Pannwitz transmitted this assurance a few minutes after he had received it to a member of his Counter intelligence section, Captain Petrovsky, who had been waiting outside in his car while one of the meetings took place.[11]

"I remember the day well," Petrovsky recalled in 1958. "General von Pannwitz had gone into the British General's headquarters, and I remained outside in the car.

"As I sat there in my German uniform a group of Tito partisans passed me with a major at their head. He did not wear epaulettes like we did, but had on his sleeve an insignia, one wide and one narrow golden stripe. Our eyes met, but instead of a look of hatred passing between us we recognized each other instantly. He ran toward me,

[11] This meeting took place, according to Captain Petrovsky, between May 14 and 20, 1945.

and I jumped out of the car. We embraced like brothers, and you should have seen the curious looks on the faces of his men and on the face of our Kuban Cossack driver. They could, from their expressions, have been witnessing a miracle.

"Five years before we had both been Yugoslavian officers and close friends.

"Major Peter Bogdanovitch and I sat down on a grass verge at the side of the road and talked, mainly about the past. Then Peter said, 'Well Anatol, where shall we go now? In which army will you serve? Why not come back to Belgrade with me?'

"I replied, 'No, my dear Pero, our lives must go on different paths, and I doubt if we shall ever meet again.'

"We embraced each other with tears in our eyes, and then the differences of war separated us. The partisan Major led his detachment away without a backward glance, and I got back into the car. A few minutes later General von Pannwitz emerged and we drove off, and it was then that he told me the good news that all of us would be going to Canada or Australia. We were both overjoyed at the prospect."

On May 24, 1945, representatives from all the surviving regiments of the Corps gathered in Althofen at von Pannwitz' request and with British permission to ascertain whether the men wished to

replace him as their Field Ataman with a native-born Cossack.

When the question was put to the delegates in the presence of a British colonel, all of them publicly and without hesitation demanded that their "Father" remain at their head. He thanked them for their confidence in him and promised that he would never desert them. He also stressed that, when they returned to their comrades, they were to tell all of them that the rumors circulating among them to the effect that the Corps would be extradited to the U.S.S.R. were false; that he had received assurances from the British Command that such a thing would never happen.

Then the British Colonel spoke to them through an interpreter. He echoed all that von Pannwitz had said and, after congratulating them for their maintenance of discipline, he reassured all of them, speaking for the British High Command, that not a single Cossack would be handed over to Stalin's headhunters but they would all be resettled in Canada or Australia.

The men cheered him and individuals went up to him afterward to express their thanks. It was a festive occasion. The rumors had been squashed; the men knew that they would be safe and von Pannwitz was to remain their Field Ataman. Yet the British Colonel was hiding something. The day before, May 23, representatives of General Alexander, acting for the British Government, and representatives

of the Soviet Balkan Command, acting on behalf of the Soviet Presidium, had concluded an agreement in Vienna to the effect that all those Cossacks in southern Austria who had been Soviet citizens on or after September 1, 1939, were to be handed over to the Red Army, beginning on May 28, 1945, even if they refused to return voluntarily.

According to the terms of the still secret Vienna Agreement, the Cossack Corps was designated as a "Special Unit of the German S.S. Partisan Forces" and as "anti-revolutionary White bandits who had been in German pay."

At the time none of the Cossacks knew of the existence of the agreement, and when the commander of the First Division, Colonel Wagner, visited von Pannwitz in Neumarkt on May 25 the latter still believed implicitly in the promises he had received from the British. Wagner, for his part, had his doubts but he did not voice them. He did not have to. The next day, at 9:10 A.M., two British staff cars and two trucks with soldiers arrived in the small village of Müllen where, on the nineteenth, von Pannwitz had established his HQ in the village schoolhouse. A British colonel went into the school building and remained alone with the Field Ataman for an hour. In the interim some Bren gun carriers had arrived in the village, and the Cossack officers and men billeted there were loaded onto the trucks. General von Pannwitz and his Chief of Staff then emerged, together with the

British colonel and other officers of his staff. They got into the two cars and then, guarded by Bren gun carriers and armed motorcyclists, the small convoy moved off in the direction of Judenburg and the Red Army.

Pannwitz remained in Red hands at Judenburg, together with other Cossack officers, until May 30, when he was separated from them and taken to Graz. From there he was taken to Baden near Vienna, but on June 3, 1945, he was moved again, and for a week his movements remain shrouded in mystery.

According to information collected and documented by General V. V. Naumenko—the leader of the Kuban Cossacks now living in the United States —he was handed back to the British and was known to have been interrogated in Trieste and other places to ascertain whether he should face charges of being a war criminal.

An unconfirmed report states, and this has been widely accepted, that while von Pannwitz was under guard by British troops in Steyr on June 8 and 9, 1945, the British authorities decided that he was not a war criminal and, as he was not a Russian but a German officer, he could be transferred to a POW camp in the British Occupation Zone.

The same unconfirmed report alleges that he replied, when given a chance to remain in the West, "I shared with the Cossacks their good times, and now I wish to share their trials with them. I con-

cluded with them a pact of lifelong friendship from which I can be released only by death. In any case, perhaps, by going with them I can help alleviate their fate by taking part of the guilt attributed to them upon myself."

Irrespective of what he did say, it is known that on June 10, 1945, he was taken by a group of British and U.S. officers to the railroad station at Enns on the Danube, where a group of Red Army officers joined them. They waited on the platform. Pannwitz, wearing the uniform of a German general and the fur hat of the Kuban Cossacks—the first Cossacks he fought with—stood alone and watched a train comprising some thirty freight cars pull into the station.

Each freight car was sealed with barbed wire, and on either side of the tracks were more than a hundred MVD[12] troops, acting as sentries to prevent any escapes. Inside the crowded cars were two thousand former members of the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps on their way to the Soviet Union and not, as they had been promised, to the British Commonwealth.

As the train screeched to a halt, von Pannwitz saw the pale faces of his former comrades in arms. They saw him, too, and men began to shout the news, "Batka Pannwitz is here at the station." There was a prolonged silence after the initial outburst of jubilation, as it dawned upon the prisoners that

[12] MVD—Soviet Secret Police.

their general had not come to rescue them but to join them, on what for many was to be their last journey on earth.

The silence ended as mysteriously as it had begun. With one voice the two thousand prisoners began to sing—it was a song one of them had written in Yugoslavia dedicated to their commander. Tears rolled freely down von Pannwitz' face and, despite the order broadcast in Russian over the station's loudspeaker system informing the Cossacks that unless they ceased singing immediately the Red troops would open fire, the song went on. It only stopped when von Pannwitz lifted his hand requesting silence. Without any further formality he was bundled into a special coach, and the train steamed out on its way to Moscow and Siberia.

At first the Field Ataman was taken to the infamous Lubianka prison, where he was submitted to many trials, but the Red inquisitors failed to break down his resistance. From prisoners who were in jail with him and have now mercifully returned to the West, it is known that he defied his captors right up to the end.

From the Lubianka he was taken to the Butyrka prison and installed in a cell that was painted black; the walls, the floor, the ceiling, even the scanty bedclothes were black. And it was from there that he went to his execution, which took place, as far as Soviet records, which are very meager, tell us, on

January 16, 1947. But he died as he would have wanted to, alongside other Cossacks.

Back in Austria, the remnants of the Corps did not know that von Pannwitz had been arrested and life went on for them in its semiutopian state with all waiting for their transportation to new homes overseas. The false sense of security was destined not to last for long. On the evening of May 26, 1945, the commander of the Eleventh British Armored Division visited Colonel Wagner at the latter's HQ in Sirnitz and told him that the following morning all his men were to be transferred to a camp near Weitensfeld, where the officers, Cossack and German, would be separated from the men.

Wagner felt that this was the first step along the road to extradition, and he dreaded the task of telling von Pannwitz the news, because he did not know he had already been arrested. When the British General left Sirnitz, Colonel Wagner sent one of his few remaining German officers to find out what type of camp awaited the men of the First Division. His intuition proved to be correct. It had high barbed-wire fences and tall observation towers. A prison camp.

Without waiting to consult the Field Ataman, Wagner hinted to the men that imprisonment was imminent and those who wished to avoid it should make their escape that night and travel north into Germany. He also told one of the Cossack officers,

Major Ostrovsky, that he intended to make his own escape before the final curtain dropped.

Later that day the British General returned to Sirnitz, and Wagner asked him quite bluntly if the camp at Weitensfeld was a prelude to extradition. The General reluctantly confirmed it, and that night a chain of British soldiers surrounded the First Division's bivouac site, but still a number of Cossacks, Colonel Wagner, and other Germans managed to escape. Some of them were even helped by a British lieutenant and other individual soldiers. Yet the majority of the Cossacks still believed in a miracle—that Batka von Pannwitz would save them—and so they allowed themselves to be escorted, without offering any resistance, to the camp at Weitensfeld. Upon their arrival the men, numbering fifteen thousand, were put into one camp and the officers into another.

Early in the morning of May 28, 1945, a group of nearly two hundred Cossack officers were awakened when a British corporal entered their huts, poked individuals with his truncheon, and shouted that all of them were to get dressed as quickly as possible as they were going to be moved. They got dressed, but refused to leave their huts until an officer came and told them where they were going. A British major eventually appeared and told them he had no knowledge as to their destination. Faced with this mystery and their fears of extradition, the officers became even more adamant about moving,

so the Major promised to go and find out all the details. An hour or two later he returned and informed them they were to be sent back to the Soviet Union.

On learning that their suspicions were justified, the officers told him that they refused to leave the camp as only torture and death awaited them if they went home.

"We shall treat you as mutineers if you don't do what you are told and, according to the rules of war, you will be shot," the Major countered.

A spokesman replied, "That is what we want because we prefer to die here, hit by a British bullet, rather than perish at the hands of Stalin's hangsmen."

The Major, seeing that further threats were pointless, went to report this act of "insubordination." He returned in the company of a British general, who more or less repeated what the Major had said, but he was unsuccessful too. Then he decided to replace threats by psychological terror and ordered, "Those who wish to be shot move to the left, and those of you who have decided to accept repatriation go to the right." Sixty went to the left, and the remaining 130 moved to the right. Six Cossack women belonging to the Red Cross of the Corps, who had stayed with the officers, joined those on the left, preferring death. On seeing the women in the condemned group, the General said how sorry he would be to see them shot and suggested

that they reconsider their decision and agree to enter the service of the British Red Cross in the area. Two nurses accepted this proposal, but the other four stood their ground and waited for the end.

The officers on the left were lined up together with the nurses, and a firing squad went through the motions of execution without actually firing. But even this masterpiece failed to achieve the desired result, so the firing squad was replaced by a flame thrower, which actually shot sheets of flame several times over the heads of the victims, yet they still stood there calmly with their arms folded. The General by this time appeared to be exasperated and, saying that he had changed his mind, ordered the soldiers standing by to tie the officers up and send them, like trussed chickens, to Stalin.

Three trucks drove up with one of them carrying rope and electric cables. When he saw this, an old *émigré,* Lieutenant Popoff from Zagreb in Croatia —a man not liable for extradition under the terms of the Vienna Agreement—went mad and had to be forcibly led away. The resisting officers then had a quick conference and decided that if they were tied up they would have no chance of escaping along the route, so they entered the trucks without any further opposition.

The trucks and their escorts drove away, but after two or three miles they were halted by a group of British officers, including the Major mentioned earlier in this particular episode, and one by one

the Cossack officers were called from the trucks and carefully examined to ascertain if any were old *émigrés* and not destined for repatriation. Fifty-seven were granted political asylum, the remainder were taken to the Red Army at Judenburg.

Next came the turn of the men of the First Division. In the morning of the twenty-ninth, the fifteen thousand Cossacks were assembled and told they were to be taken to a nearby railroad station from which they would be taken to Italy as the first stage of their journey to the Commonwealth. When they saw that only a handful of British soldiers were to act as their guards, they were lulled into a sense of security. The few who still harbored suspicions asked where their officers were and why they were not with them. The explanation given them was that they were to pass near to various Communist units and therefore the officers had been sent, for their own protection, via a different route to northern Italy to make preparations for the arrival of the division.

Not many took the lack of guards as an opportunity to escape from the column, but three men who stayed behind in a village after a rest watched with horror the end of the once proud Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps. The entire mass of fifteen thousand men was surrounded, without any warning, by Red soldiers who had been waiting for them in a well-prepared ambush, and there were no escapers. At no time was any effort made to ascer-

tain if all the men had been citizens of the Soviet Union on September 1, 1939.

Another part of the Corps tragedy was enacted at Klein St. Paul, where the officers of the Fifth Don Regiment of the Second Division were located.

"In the evening of May 27, 1945," Captain Petrovsky who was present relates, "the Regimental Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Borisov, told us that by order of the British Eighth Army all the officers were to be prepared, in full uniform and wearing side arms but without taking any luggage, at 8:00 A.M. the next morning, the twenty-eighth, to attend a conference with a British general to solve the problems of transporting the Cossack Corps to Canada. Only one doctor was allowed to remain behind with the Cossacks.

"At 8:00 A.M. eight British trucks covered with tarpaulin arrived and took the fifty of us in the direction of Judenburg. On the way we stopped, some thirty kilometers from Klein St. Paul, at a British military camp. The sergeant-interpreters were Jewish and spoke good Russian. They told us they were members of the Palestine Brigade.

"At the camp we were given a packaged lunch and ordered to surrender our revolvers because, we were told, it would be 'inconvenient' to attend a conference with a British general while still bearing arms. As this aroused our suspicions, our regimental priest, Father Eugene — later to die in a slave camp in Karaganda—demanded an interview

with a British priest who wore the uniform of an army captain. This officer-priest told Father Eugene that England would never commit an act betraying fighters against Communism, and he confirmed this by giving his word of honor as one priest to another.

"After learning what the British priest had said, that we would not be handed over, we surrendered our revolvers. Then the trucks came back for us, only this time there was a soldier armed with a submachine gun sitting in each one. An officer, believed to be a major, rode in a jeep at the head of our convoy with a large white flag flying from its bonnet.

"Approximately one or two kilometers from the camp we saw on the road in front of us a number of tanks with their guns trained on our convoy. I, and others, thought it was a trap. Some said it was in our honor.

"We drove on singing with the tanks accompanying us for about an hour, and then we stopped. The sergeant-interpreters jumped down and said, 'Officers, please get down and march ahead in groups.' When we looked out of the trucks we saw ahead of us Red Soldiers of the MVD armed with automatic rifles. We also saw the British officer who headed our convoy talking to a Soviet officer; we saw him hand over some papers from a portfolio and then shake hands. . . . The papers he delivered were the lists of all our names. . . ."

They had arrived at Judenburg. And again no

effort was made to examine the fifty officers to see which had been Soviet citizens. If there had been, Captain Petrovsky would have been released for he left Russia in 1920, at the age of seventeen, with the forces of General Baron Wrangel. In 1924 he became a Yugoslav citizen, and in 1925 entered the Yugoslavian Army in which he served until 1941, when he held the rank of cavalry captain. Between 1941-42 he worked at exposing Communist partisan organizations, and after that was made a lieutenant in the Wehrmacht, still specializing in combatting Communist activities. In August, 1944, he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, and at the end of November to captain in the Intelligence Section of the Second Division of the Cossack Corps.

When the fifty officers, including Petrovsky, were paraded by the senior Red officer at Judenburg, General Dolmatov, the latter expressed his surprise at finding old *émigrés* in the group, as the Soviets had not demanded they be handed over. However, this did not prevent the Soviet Government from condemning Petrovsky, without a trial, to a period of ten to twenty-six years' imprisonment in various concentration camps.[13]

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[13] Captain Anatol Petrovsky remained in various slave-labor camps, where he was forced to work as a human pack animal until the Soviets released him on June 4, 1956, and allowed him, as a non-Soviet citizen, to return to West Germany.

Due to the harshness of his slave years, he arrived back in the West with his health undermined.

OFFICERS FIRST

THE "COSSACK LAND," depleted during the trek of the Little Nation, rapidly recouped its size after its arrival in northern Italy. In addition to the many families, General Domanov found that he had some twenty thousand troops under his command, and these presented a grave problem. During the trek the original Cossack Reserve Regiment had lost some of its discipline and smartness, and, to make matters worse, the Germans transferred to him Cossack units which they found to be unmanageable. Among the recalcitrants was a well-armed horde of Caucasian Highlanders, who had been so disillusioned by the Germans and their promises for the future that they had become little more than uniformed bandits. They robbed people on the roads, plundered villages, and raped any Italian women who fell into their hands.

Domanov and the Caucasian commander, General Sultan Kelitch Ghirey, could do little to improve the situation, for daily more and more people flooded into the area. Many had walked all the way from France to join their countrymen, and the encampment also became a refuge for thousands of

Soviet displaced persons, who fled from the factories they had been forcibly recruited into by the Germans.

However, not all the newcomers or the Cossack soldiers presented a problem. Small units who joined the force from Yugoslavia and part of the Russian Defense Corps, together with other battalions, rendered great service in warding off the increasing number of partisan raids. Yet a feeling of despair permeated everyone until March, 1945, when General Peter Krasnov, his wife, and other members of the Cossack Central Administration arrived. He had the personality, something Domanov lacked, to restore at least a modicum of order and *élan.*

To celebrate Krasnov's arrival a military march past took place in Cavazzo, and afterward, accompanied by his adjutant General Domanov, the German liaison officer to the Cossack Land and another German officer, Krasnov, went to the village of Villa Santina, where the Cossack Cadet School had been established.

At first the cadets received their guests in a manner befitting their future military stature, but as soon as Domanov and the German officers retired and left General Krasnov and his adjutant alone with them they abandoned all restraint and crowded around him.

He told the cadets what goal they should aim for, and, unlike many *émigrés* who could dwell only upon the dismal plight they found themselves in,

Krasnov talked about the liberation of Russia, which he was sure would come within their lifetime if not in his. He said that when they had freed their Motherland they must insure that the new Russia was built upon a sound political foundation to prevent anything like a recurrence of Communism.

"It is all very well for some pseudo-intellectuals to tell you that everything that happened before the February, 1917, revolution must be discarded and forgotten. Just look what happened when Kerensky tried to do just that. He unleashed a wave of terror. For it was then, and only then, when he ignored our long and glorious history, that my Russia, and your Russia too, ceased to exist.

"If you are to succeed in rebuilding our Holy and Glorious Motherland, after you have liberated it you must never forget that there cannot be a future without a past and that Russia did not come into being in February, 1917. . . ."

The youthful audience surrounding him was silent as he went on to tell them about some of the more inspiring episodes of Russian and Cossack history, and when he left they cheered him until he was long out of view.

Toward the end of April, 1945, and just after the arrival of General Schkuro, the town of Oleso was bombed by the Western Allies and many people killed in the raid. That was the beginning of the end of the Cossack Land. Without waiting for any orders, individuals and entire groups of families har-

nessed their horses and started to wander northward.

A few days later, on April 27, a group of local partisan leaders operating near Tolmezzo arrived in the town for a parley with General Domanov. They demanded two things. The immediate surrender of all arms and, following this, the evacuation of all his soldiers and families into Austria.

Domanov knew he was in a weak position. His soldiers were demoralized at the thought of the impending end of the war. Most of them were far more concerned about their personal future than about fighting what virtually amounted to an entire partisan army. Yet, if he agreed to lay down his arms, he would leave them all at the dubious mercy of the guerrillas, who were, for the most part, Communist or pro-Soviet. He therefore refused to accept their ultimatum.

After a prolonged discussion a compromise was reached. The Cossacks would retain their arms but would not use them unless they were attacked, and Domanov would order the immediate march of all members of the Cossack Land toward Austria. In return the partisans agreed that they would allow this withdrawal to take place unhindered.

The decision was well received among the people, especially among the old *émigrés* who had fought in the Civil War, for they had been advocating that all of them should seek the protection of the British, their former allies, who, they were sure, would understand their plight as anti-Communists.

When the guerrilla mediators left Tolmezzo, it was not long before large groups of partisans openly took up positions near all the places where the Cossacks were camped, but they took no action. Obviously they were waiting to see if Domanov kept his word.

At noon on April 28, 1945, the kibitkas, the covered carts, and people on foot with their few belongings strapped to their backs started to trek northwest together with various Cossack formations. General Domanov remained behind to supervise the exodus and did not leave until early in May.

The following day, the twenty-ninth, the last members of the Cossack Land, some five hundred Don and Kuban families who had been billeted near Tolmezzo, got under way. It was at that juncture the partisans broke the agreement. Thinking they had little to fear from the rearguard, they attacked Villa Santina. But they had forgotten about the well-trained cadets, who fought back, and although their commanding officer was killed during the fighting they forced the guerrillas to retreat, leaving many dead and wounded behind.

Domanov then ordered the cadets and a small Cossack detachment that had been based at Udine to act as a rearguard to the straggling columns and ward off any further attacks.

This final stage of the trek west was by far the worst stage of the journey. Transport was at a premium and a large percentage had to walk, yet

no one was left behind. Everyone helped the others. The wounded, the aged, and the younger children were put into the carts while the owners walked alongside. No one had ordered this. It was the spirit of self-sacrifice that had dominated the Land since it left home more than two years before.

To make matters worse, for the first few days it rained heavily but on they went. Day and night they trudged on into the Alps and the high mountain pass.

Shortage of food was one of the main problems. To meet this, the advance guard collected what they could from the farms they passed on the way, and this meager amount was equally shared out.

Then the weather changed—for the worse. As they entered the mountain pass a snowstorm blew up, and within a few hours the column, which stretched for miles, was covered with a cold, white blanket. People and horses got buried in snowdrifts and many vanished into white graves, never to be seen again.

As there was no fodder for the horses and the remaining camels, they fell exhausted in their tracks and had to be shot. This made more people walk and use up their small reserve of strength. Horseless kibitkas were left where the horses had died, and added to them as litter were many hand-drawn carts whose owners had no strength left to pull them further. Weeks later, when the thaw came, the partisans, who had made no frontal attack but

made the Cossacks run through a gauntlet of spasmodic ambushes and sniping, cleared the pass of hundreds of bodies.

While the blizzard was at its height and the column neared the highest point of its journey, a remarkable event took place. Just before midnight on May 3, 1945, someone remembered that it was the eve of Maundy Thursday. The column halted, as if stunned by the news. And there, high in the Italian Alps, in the middle of a snowstorm, the people held a religious service. Trained and untrained voices mingled as they sang the pre-Easter canticles, and even those who had been cursing without a break for days bared their heads and knelt in the snow to pray.

Even as they knelt, it seemed that their prayers had been answered. The snow stopped and the march was resumed downhill, for they had entered Austria and were coming to the valley of the Drava.[1]

When they crossed the Austrian frontier and reached the town of Kötschach, General Domanov sent General Vasiliev back to Tolmezzo to meet the British commander of the Thirty-sixth Brigade, Brigadier General Mason, who had made his headquarters there.

General Mason received Vasiliev and his woman interpreter in the presence of another British general, who is assumed to have been General Arbuthnot, commander of the Seventy-eighth Division.

[1] The river Drava—Drau in German.

Both Mason and his colleague listened patiently as Vasiliev explained that the Cossack Land and the troops attached to it wished to surrender and seek political asylum from the British Government. He said they were not Nazi hirelings but simply anti-Communists who had seized the first available opportunity since the Civil War in 1918-20 to take up arms in an effort to liberate their homeland from Marxist oppression.

Throughout the meeting Vasiliev and his companion were well treated, and he duly returned to Domanov with the news that, whereas General Mason could say nothing about the ultimate fate of the Cossacks, he could assure them that there would be no extradition to the Soviets.

While Vasiliev was in Italy two other important events took place. First, Domanov had a series of violent arguments with his new German liaison officer—Captain Mueller was no longer in that position. The German threatened him with dire consequences for moving the Cossacks without having obtained the necessary permission to do so from the German High Command. In the end Domanov lost his temper. He told the German that he was not at the beck and call of the Germans; that he was a Russian officer whose sole purpose was to preserve the freedom of his people and that if he thought it necessary to consult anyone it would not have been a German but the commander of the Free Russian forces, General Andrei Vlasov.

Secondly, General Krasnov, who took no part in the governing of the Cossack Land, wrote a letter to Field Marshal Alexander. He reminded him how they had fought together against the Communists during the Russian Civil War and requested that the British troops under his command protect the Cossack Land from the Soviets and transmit to his government the request that all of them be accorded political asylum as stateless refugees. The letter went unanswered.

Undeterred by Field Marshal Alexander's silence, the mass of the Cossacks were jubilant. All of them knew that General Mason had said there would be no extradition.

On May 4, 1945, the main force of the Cossacks reached Lienz and set up camps along the Oberdrauburg-Lienz road in fulfillment of British orders. Still without food, the Cossacks waited for the arrival of British troops. These reached Lienz, after a march through the mountains, on the ninth. They were the men of the Eighth Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, plus reinforcements, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel A. D. Malcolm, who had been entrusted by General Mason with disarming the Cossack units.

Many of the aged, the sick and wounded, and families numbering many thousands were quickly housed in an open camp, Camp Peggetz, while the remainder, the Cossack regiments plus those fam-

ilies who refused to be parted from their menfolk, stayed in camps established along the roadside.

The day after the arrival of the British troops in Lienz, Domanov sent a group of officers to try to secure food for the starving mass, but none was available and they returned empty-handed. Five days later this situation altered, and biscuits, canned meat, sugar, and tea were distributed.

With food inside them, the Cossacks' spirits soared and, when they were ordered to surrender their arms on the sixteenth, they still had no reason to doubt their safety. Admittedly, when they first received the order there was a degree of consternation, but as soon as they found out that the officers could retain their revolvers they did not oppose the disarming. Another factor which lulled their doubts, if any, was the rumor that before long their motley assortment of weapons would be replaced by standard British equipment. Upon reflection and as a result of a penetrating inquiry by General Naumenko, many of the men who were present assert that this was not a rumor and that they had personally been told by British officers that they would receive new arms.

They were left to their own devices after that, and as not one of the camps was guarded or surrounded with barbed wire, and as they were allowed to roam around the countryside without anyone trying to stop them, it was assumed that they had been accepted as refugees and granted asylum. So

confident were they of this that very few took the opportunity to escape and bury themselves in local obscurity.

On May 22, 1945, the daily food ration per person was increased, and that tended to confirm their belief. This was subsequently strengthened by two other rumors that had started to circulate. Namely, that the Cossacks were to be kept together and later resettled overseas, or that only the old, the women, and children were to go to Australia or Canada while the men were to receive instruction in the use of British weapons so that they could be incorporated into a Free Russian force to be used against the Soviets. Those who were in Lienz at the time and are now in the West quote the mysterious telegram allegedly sent by Winston Churchill to Field Marshal Montgomery, telling the latter that all German troops were to be kept in readiness for action against the Soviet Union as proof that the Cossacks' information was not mere idle speculation but part of the British plan at that period.

May 23, 1945, a British lieutenant general made a tour of inspection of all the encampments and spent some time at the Cossack Cadet School. He joked with the boys; talked about the future of a Free Russia in world society, and before leaving tasted their food and subsequently ordered that the size of their rations be increased because "they were growing boys." Upon completion, he congratulated Domanov and other officers on the excellent disci-

pline maintained by the Cossacks and thanked them for their hospitality.

Everyone was delighted at the outcome of his visit until the following day, the twenty-fifth, when Domanov went to see the same General with the complaint that some British soldiers were taking Cossack horses without their owners' permission, and asked that this type of looting be expressly forbidden.

The General was no longer the genial person of the day before. "There are no Cossack horses," he replied. "The horses are now the property of the King of England and have been since you became prisoners of war." Until that moment the word "prisoner" had never been used, and it was in a grave state of anxiety that Domanov went to consult General Krasnov as to what this change of heart might mean.

Although Krasnov had no authority, having relinquished it earlier in Italy, Domanov always discussed matters with him before reaching a decision. In fact, following their arrival from Kötschach, General Krasnov and his wife, Lydia Feodorovna, shared a villa outside Lienz—which had been placed at their disposal by the British—with Domanov and his wife.

When he heard what Domanov had to say Krasnov sat down and wrote a second letter to Field Marshal Alexander, complaining about the people of the Cossack Land being classified as "prisoners of war" and repeated what he had written previ-

ously; that the Cossacks were not traitors to Russia but were Russians trying to rebuild the country which the Communists had destroyed and replaced by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; that they were fighting so that everyone in Russia could enjoy the freedoms promised to the world under the terms of the Atlantic Charter agreed to by Britain and the United States in 1941. In closing he expressed his belief in British justice, which he was sure would not hand them over to their enemy because they had never fought against Britain or the United States and were the true voice of the Russian opposition to Red tyranny.

To prevent unrest Domanov agreed not to mention what the British General had told him until Krasnov received a reply from Field Marshal Alexander. Except for that incident, which remained a secret shared by only a handful of the more trusted senior officers, the British continued to treat the Cossacks with politeness and respect until May 26, when two more ominous events took place.

Without any prior notice a truckload of British soldiers arrived at the Cossack Bank and, using the name of a senior officer as their authority, demanded the keys to the safe. They checked its contents with the Bank's director looking on, and then, despite his protest that the safe contained only the money belonging to individuals who had deposited their life savings with him and that it did not represent any money belonging to the paymaster of the Cos-

sack Land, they locked the safe and loaded it onto the truck and drove away.

The news of this traveled fast from camp to camp, and the depositors rushed to town to see if they could recover a little of their loss. There was not a penny left. Six million German marks and an equivalent amount in Italian lira had all gone. Standing in groups, the people tried to fathom the reason for the theft, and certain individuals went to see the Town Commandant, Major Davis, to see if he would help in recovering their money. He was not available to see them.

The same day General Schkuro arrived in Lienz, and after a brief conversation with Domanov went in his car to Camp Peggetz, where, standing upright and with the hood down, he was driven slowly along the camp's main street waving to the cheering thousands. Many of the people in the crowd he knew and he stopped to talk to them.

His arrival swept aside the depression that followed the robbery. "Now that General Schkuro is with us everything will be all right. He will look after us. The British respect him. Did you know that during the Civil War they gave him a high-ranking decoration? Yes, they will listen to him and he will save us."

He stayed at Peggetz for a few hours and then returned to the Golden Fish Hotel in Lienz, where Domanov had set up his new headquarters to allow General and Mrs. Krasnov more privacy. Domanov

had reserved a room in the hotel for General Schkuro and his wife, and that evening he gave a dinner party in the General's honor.

The dinner was a great success. They talked about the old days when Schkuro had mauled the young Red Army and about the future, too. After a convivial evening with more than enough to drink, the General and his wife retired to bed.

In the early hours of the morning Schkuro awoke his wife and, bursting into tears, said, "Do you know that Domanov has betrayed me? He invited us here and tried to get me drunk so that the British could catch me without any trouble and hand me over to the Soviets."

His wife tried to comfort him; to assure him that he must be mistaken. "Domanov would never do a thing like that," she argued but she was wrong. During the dinner his revolver had disappeared, and when they looked out of the bedroom window they saw that all means of entry and exit were guarded by sentries devoted to the Campaign Ataman.

At breakfasttime a British officer with an armed escort went up to the General's room and informed him and his aide that they were to pack their belongings, as they were being moved to new quarters. When asked where they were to be, the officer sarcastically answered, "Wherever it has been decided you should live."

The reply only increased Schkuro's fears, and he told his aide and another Cossack officer who had

come into the room to see what was happening, that he was sure he would first be placed behind barbed wire and then handed over to the Red Army.

Both Cossack officers tried to calm his nerves by saying that such an action was unthinkable and would be a blot upon the British tradition of justice and fair play. He still was not convinced as he was driven away with Cossack bystanders waving to him and shouting that they would meet again soon. Schkuro was taken, together with his aide, to a heavily guarded camp in Spittal and, as he suspected, handed over to the Red Army at Judenburg.

That very same evening it was announced that every member of the Cossack Land was to receive the same rations as the British soldiers. The news was well received, and not even the order which followed it, that all officers were to surrender their revolvers, could mar the festive mood. The officers had been expecting something like that to happen, as since their arrival the four thousand Caucasians under General Sultan Kelitch Ghirey, camped outside Oberdrauburg, had been on the rampage.

The Caucasians were simple people, speaking among themselves fifteen different languages. They had believed in the German promises to liberate their homeland. They had fought alongside the Wehrmacht to achieve that goal, but during the retreat when they realized that all was lost they resorted to brigandry. They had no qualms about

their actions. They hated the West for what it had done to them, and once they arrived in Austria—the West—they were determined to make the people repay them in some form or another.

General Ghirey tried to control them, and his regular units responded to his call for discipline. The others ignored his orders and were prepared to accept the death penalty that he decreed for all those who were caught looting, stealing, or molesting the Austrian population.

According to General Semen N. Krasnov, former Chief of Staff of General Peter N. Krasnov, once the Caucasians had been subdued the arms would be restored, because the British knew that the Cossacks were not responsible for the raids on the civil population.

But more orders were to come. That same evening, May 27, 1945, Major Davis, the Town Commandant, visited General Domanov at the Golden Fish Hotel and told him and his aide, Captain Butlerov, that all the Cossack officers were to be prepared, at their various camp locations, at 1:00 P.M. the next afternoon to go to a conference with the commander of the Eighth Army, Field Marshal Alexander, who had some announcements to make.

"Why all the officers?" Domanov asked. "You must remember that I have more than two thousand of them, and it will be difficult for you to transport them all to a conference. Wouldn't it

be easier for you to take regimental and unit commanders?"

"No," Major Davis replied emphatically. "Don't worry about the transportation problem, that is our headache.

"The Army Commander has ordered all officers to attend the conference, and that is that."

Before leaving the Major said, "And please do not forget to tell General Peter Krasnov about this, as the Commander is particularly interested in meeting him." He then suggested that Domanov should not disturb the officers that night but tell them in the morning. "Just think, it will be such an honor for them."

Next morning Domanov telephoned or sent out messengers to the various units to tell the officers the news, and he sent a special messenger to tell General Peter Krasnov, who was then seventy-six years old. He had fading eyesight and little strength left in his legs.

At the appointed time some officers assembled outside the Golden Fish and saw British cars and a bus drive into the square. Major Davis arrived and through his interpreter asked Lieutenant General Solamakin, the Chief of Staff, to get the officers into the transport. When Davis was asked by some of the officers' wives whether their husbands would require their cloaks or overcoats and some food, he assured them that it would be unnecessary as they would be back again in a few hours' time.

At 2:45 P.M. the first car with General Krasnov in it left the square. It was followed by another carrying Domanov, Captain Butlerov, and another officer, plus an escort. Major Davis watched the column under the command of a Major Lee drive away toward Spittal, and then he walked among the small crowd assuring them that the officers would be back home again before nightfall.

When he gave the order for all the officers to attend the conference, records show that in the Cossack Land there were 2,756 Cossack officers, excluding the Caucasian officers under General Ghirey. But for one reason and another only 2,201 officers plus two hundred Caucasians actually went.[2]

As the convoy drove through Camp Peggetz and other settlements the number of trucks increased, and each truck was guarded by one or two British soldiers with automatic rifles.

Finally, the convoy consisted of 4 buses, 58 trucks, 8 small trucks, 3 Red Cross cars, and the British military personnel consisted of 140 drivers and co-drivers, 30 officers and 15 interpreters, 25 Bren gun carriers, several jeeps with machine guns, and numerous armed motorcyclists.

Not long after it joined the main highway armored cars and motorized infantry joined the escorts, led by some officers in a jeep. Armored cars were interspersed between the trucks, while armed

[2] In the number of 2,201 officers there were included chaplains, medical officers, and civilian officials accorded officer status.

motorcyclists continually swarmed around. When some inquisitive Cossacks asked the escorting soldiers why they were being so well guarded, the reply was, "To protect you, as there are still some armed S.S. units in the woods who might attack an unguarded convoy."

Two hours after they had left Lienz they approached Spittal and a vast compound surrounded with high, double barbed-wire fences, a main watchtower, and sentries posted at short distances along the wire. It was a former German POW camp.

They were unloaded at the main gate, and each officer was deftly searched. After that they were allowed to enter the camp and go into any hut they chose. They were then joined by Generals Vasiliev, Solamakin, Golovko, and General Krasnov's aide, Colonel Morgunov.

A crowd clustered around Krasnov and asked him what he thought this development meant. He tried to cheer them up and, turning to his grandson, Captain Nikolai Krasnov, he said, "Everything will be clarified at the conference later today, so don't worry yourselves."

The conference failed to materialize. Instead they were ordered to compile lists giving name, rank, and unit and instead of sitting down to dine with Field Marshal Alexander cans of food and packages of cigarettes were handed to them. The exceptions to this were General Domanov, General Tichotski,

and Captain Butlerov, who had been invited to have dinner with the British camp authorities.

About 9:00 P.M. a wild-eyed Domanov burst into the hut where General Krasnov was and blurted out that all of them were to be handed over to the Red Army at four in the morning. Unable to believe what he had heard, Krasnov questioned him and it was then that it emerged that Domanov had known all the time that there would be no conference, but, instead, they were to be extradited.

Several officers turned on Domanov and would have killed him for deceiving them, had not Krasnov intervened on his behalf. He was not interested in accusing Domanov but concentrated upon drawing up two petitions addressed to King George VI and to the International Red Cross in Geneva, which were duly signed by many of the officers in the camp.

In the petitions Krasnov asked that an investigation be made into the reasons why the Cossacks were to be found fighting alongside the Germans, and asking that if, as a result of the investigation, any officer or group of officers were guilty of war crimes, they should be made to stand trial before an International Military Tribunal. They both ended with the words, "I implore you in the name of justice, humanity, and Almighty God."

Captain Butlerov took them to the officer who had commanded the convoy, and he promised to pass them along to London and Geneva, but he

pointed out that the morning was not all that far away.

That night no one slept. Men sat in clusters whispering about their future as Red prisoners or trying to evolve schemes of how to escape. The latter was not easy, as a searchlight kept circling the camp perimeter to prevent it. Some had the idea of drawing up lists of the old *émigrés* who had never been citizens of the U.S.S.R., approximately 68 per cent of them, but Krasnov forbade it. "We are all in the same boat and we shall sink or swim together," he said.

When the fateful dawn broke on May 29, 1945, the officers left the huts, leaving behind them an old *émigré* called Tarussky who had hanged himself and Mikhailov who had made an unsuccessful bid at committing suicide. All two thousand odd of them knelt in the camp compound while a priest conducted a service. Several tanks entered the camp, but the officers remained on their knees praying.

Four o'clock came and went. At 8:00 A.M. a cry was wrung from the throats of the multitude. A company of soldiers, believed to have been members of the Palestine Brigade, armed with rifles and fixed bayonets or truncheons, marched through the main gate together with an officer.

Someone cried out, "Shoot us now as we will not return alive." The priest held the crucifix high above the heads of his congregation and blessed the advancing repatriators. Interpreters mingled among

the officers and ordered them to get into the trucks which had arrived, and said they would be shot if they did not do what they were told. No one moved. The soldiers advanced. Using rifle butts and truncheons, they started to club the Cossacks into a state of unconsciousness and threw them into the trucks like so many sacks of potatoes. As one truck was filled with its human cargo, it was surrounded by armed motorcyclists and with a light tank in front and behind started its journey toward Judenburg.

Some of the officers who had been loaded while semiconscious jumped out of the trucks again, but there was no avenue of escape. They were caught and clubbed into submission and reloaded.

Throughout the religious service General Krasnov sat by the window of his hut looking out and resting his legs. A squad of soldiers rushed to drag him out, but that was too much for the Cossacks. Armed only with their fists, they beat the soldiers back and then, very gently, they lifted the aged Ataman General out and formed a bodyguard around him as he walked heavily, leaning on his cane, toward the trucks. Seeing that further resistance was futile, the remaining officers walked over to the trucks and got in.

One officer already in a truck asked a soldier for a cigarette. The soldier pointed to the officer's wristwatch, and before long a roaring trade was

being conducted on the ratio of one cigarette for one watch.

By 9:30 A.M. the camp had been emptied.

A few had managed to hide and therefore escape the common fate. One of the survivors had hidden himself under a pile of rubbish in one of the huts and told how, two days later, he was unearthed by some soldiers who were rummaging around, but when he gave them his gold wristwatch they took it and left him alone.

At Judenburg the column stopped before a stone bridge over the river Mur. On the other side Red Army sentries waited to receive the prisoners. The escorting troops jumped out of the trucks and again a session of trading took place. Cigarettes were exchanged for anything of value, and as many of the men spoke Polish the prisoners could not help but understand that they were being told that they would not be needing their wedding and signet rings where they were going and they would not need the cameras that some officers had taken to the "conference" in the hope of making a record of the historic meeting.

The first truck went over the bridge. There was a scream. An officer had thrown himself into the river below, which was so shallow at that point that he was smashed to pieces on the rocks, his blood flowing out into the water like a dye. He was not the only one, and before the last truck made the crossing the riverbed was littered with broken bodies.

Later three Cossack corpses were fished out of the river a mile below the bridge by British soldiers and buried. Today there is a cross there with the English inscription: "Here rest three unknown Cossacks," and the grave is carefully tended by local Austrians.

General Schkuro joined them as they entered a large steelworks that the Red Army had taken over to serve as a receiving depot. Each officer was forced to fill in a form with his name, rank, place and date of birth, and again the vultures descended. This time it was Red soldiers who wanted watches, and they did not offer to barter for them. They just pointed at the article desired and then aimed a rifle at the victim.

As well as being an hour of tragedy it was also a moment for reunions. General Helmuth von Pannwitz, still wearing his Kuban Cossack *papakha*,[3] and some of his officers from the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps had arrived ahead of them. General Krasnov greeted von Pannwitz like a long-lost son who had returned to the family fold. Schkuro spent his time harping on the treachery of the British, and he repeatedly expressed the desire to fling the Order he had been given back at them. "I don't want to sully myself with it," he said.

An hour after their arrival at the steelworks, Generals Krasnov and Schkuro were summoned to meet

[3] *Papakha*—hat of the Kuban Cossacks.

the local Red Army commander, General Dolmatov, who originated from the Don region.

Dolmatov and several elderly Red Army colonels met the two officers and treated them warmly. To General Krasnov he expressed the hope that, now he was "home" again, he would write more about the Cossackhood and take his place alongside Mikhail Sholokhov, the Soviet author of *And Quiet Flows the Don,* which has been published throughout the world.

Then he talked to Schkuro about the Civil War, and together they relived some of the battles they had fought on opposing sides.

As they were leaving Dolmatov said that since the war the Soviet Union had altered and that the old Communist regime of 1917-41 had gone forever, and subsequently neither of them, nor their colleagues, had anything to fear for their future.

"Naturally you will be taken to Moscow for questioning, but you will be released quickly, as it will only be a formality and then you will be free to go back home again."

Later, when Dolmatov visited the prison-factory and perused the lists of officers who had been delivered to him, he asked why so many old *émigrés* had been included, as he and the Kremlin were only interested in former Soviet citizens. No one could give him an answer.

Many old *émigrés* who have now returned to the West from Red concentration camps report how

General Domanov stepped forward and gave the Red General Dolmatov a letter which he said was from the British military authorities in Lienz, asking that the Soviets show him clemency as he had been instrumental in helping to extradite the officers without any trouble.

These same sources also record that when General Dolmatov took the letter he had a look of undisguised disgust on his face, and he told Domanov he would get everything he deserved.

While still at Judenburg all the senior officers were treated with respect and either addressed by their rank or with the title of "Gentleman." Many Red soldiers kept going into the room where Generals Krasnov and Schkuro were. They all wanted to see the men they had hitherto known only as legends. There was always a crowd of them around Schkuro, whom they called "Ataman" or "Father," and stood listening as he told stories, colorfully illustrated by his vast command of foul language, of how his division, during the Civil War, had slaughtered the Red Army. The Red soldiers thought he was wonderful.

From there the senior officers were taken to Graz, and after a short stay there went on to Baden, where the Red Army had established a counterespionage center where each one was carefully interrogated, but without being submitted to undue violence. Then Generals Semen Krasnov, Sultan Ghirey, Domanov,

Vasiliev, and Golovko were separated, and sent as the first consignment to Moscow.

It was while they were in Baden that General von Pannwitz was returned to the British lines, and on June 4, 1945, the remaining senior officers were taken by air to Moscow, to the notorious Lubianka and Lerfortovo prisons and death or long slave-labor-camp sentences. The other Cossack officers were taken via various routes from Graz to meet similar fates. According to a carefully compiled report, this is what happened to the officers who were invited to the "conference:

12 generals of the White Army were taken to Moscow.

120 officers did not arrive at Graz.

1,030 officers left Graz but did not arrive in Vienna.

983 officers arrived in Vienna and then vanished into Red oblivion.

16 officers were released from Spittal by the British on May 28, 1945.

5 escaped from the camp at Spittal.

4 committed suicide in Spittal.

4 escaped between Spittal and Judenburg.

2 committed suicide in the trucks before they reached the bridge at Judenburg.[4]

On January 17, 1947, the following announcement was made in the official Soviet newspaper *Pravda*:[5]

[4] Statistics taken from the Russian *émigré* magazine *Chassovoy*, Brussels, issue No. 275/6 dated July 1, 1948.

[5] Issue No. 15/10466.

COMMUNICATION OF THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE USSR

The Military College of the Supreme Court of the USSR has heard the case of the prosecution against the arrested agents of the German Intelligence Service, leaders of armed White Guard units during the Civil War—Ataman KRASNOV, P.N., Lieutenant General of the White Army, SCHKURO, A.G., Commander of the "Wilde Division"—Major General of the White Army Prince Sultan GHIREY, Kelitch, Major General of the White Army KRASNOV, S.N., and Major General of the White Army DOMANOV, T.I. and also General of the German Army VON PANNWITZ, Helmuth, of the S.S. who, on orders from German Intelligence during the Patriotic War, struggled together with the aid of White Guardist units formed by them against the Soviet Union and carried out spying, diversionist, and terroristic activity against the USSR.

All the accused acknowledged the guilt of their crimes.

In accordance with paragraph 1 of the Ukase of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated 19 April, 1943, the Military College of the Supreme Court of the USSR sentenced the accused KRASNOV, P.N., SCHKURO, A.G., SULTAN-GHIREY, KRASNOV, S.N., DOMANOV, T.I., and VON PANNWITZ to death by hanging.

The sentence has been carried out.

In the *Pravda* announcement there are the usual propaganda inaccuracies. It states that all acknowledged their guilt. Yet if that had been the case, Stalin would have arranged a mammoth public "trial."

The anti-Communists were accused of being German spies, which is typical Communist terminology to condemn those Russians abroad and at home who fight against the Red regime. Today they are called "American spies."

Finally, General Domanov is said by *Pravda* to have been a general in the White Army. He was not. He was promoted to that rank by the Germans during the second World War. But *Pravda* did not want its readers to know that Soviet citizens had played a prominent part in the fight against Communism.

CHAPTER SIX

BACK TO THE EAST

BACK IN LIENZ on May 28, 1945, when the officers did not return from the conference by dusk, many of the wives and mothers went to see Major Davis to inquire what had happened to them; why their return had been delayed. As ever Major Davis was kind and courteous, and he assured them that there was nothing at all to worry about.

Next morning when his office was virtually in a state of siege, Major Davis announced that the officers would not be coming back immediately and again assured the dependents that there was no reason to worry as all of them were well. He apologized for not telling them their location, it was a military secret, but added there was no reason to send any food or clothing as they had more than sufficient to cover their needs. Finally he said that if anyone wished to send small personal items he would have them delivered by car.

By evening rumors began to spread in the larger camps and in Lienz itself to the effect that the officers had been handed over to the Red Army. For a time Major Davis strenuously denied it. Later, with tears in his eyes, he admitted that the rumors

were correct and that he had been equally deceived by his superiors.

About that time some of the events which had taken place at Spittal became known, as the officers who had been released arrived back as bearers of sad tidings. But before the news reached the camping sites cars drove around to them all and via portable loudspeaker systems informed them that all the Cossacks in the Drava Valley were to be repatriated to the Soviet Union under the terms of the Yalta Agreement. They were also advised not to resist repatriation, because force would be used wherever and whenever necessary.

In answer to this the inmates of Camp Peggetz gathered in the main square and declared they were going on a hunger strike in protest. The camp archpriest, Father Vasiliy Grigoriyev, a Don Cossack, drew up petitions protesting the extradition order and copies, signed by thousands of men, women, and children, were given to Major Davis for transmission to King George VI of England, whom they knew to be a close blood relative of the last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II; to King Peter of Yugoslavia as many of them were refugees who had found a haven in that country in 1920; to the Pope; to the Archbishop of Canterbury; and to the Supreme Allied Commander of the Western Allies in Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Black flags of death were hoisted over all the huts in the camp,

on trees, telegraph poles, on individual carts, and at the main gates to the camp.

As an additional protest the Roman Catholic priest in the neighboring village of Dölsach, which was less than a mile away, hoisted a large black flag from the church steeple and called upon his flock to pray for the salvation of the Cossacks. This flag was taken down the next day on the express instructions of the local British command.

Cossacks everywhere congregated in groups and discussed the situation. The overall consensus was that the British were bluffing when they said they would use force against unarmed men, women, and children who had never, at any time, been soldiers or members of para-military formations.

Under the same impression, the newly elected Ataman of Camp Peggetz, Sergeant Kuzma Tolunin, told Major Davis that none of the people would agree to return to the U.S.S.R. voluntarily, because only death awaited them there and they preferred to die in free Austria rather than in the wastes of Siberia. Without any emotion the Major advised him against organizing any form of resistance because it would be quickly broken. He then walked away, pushing aside men who were swearing at him and women who beseeched him to have pity on them and their children. Some women went down on their knees before him and offered to accept repatriation without any trouble if only he would

allow the children to remain. They were still kneeling and crying as he drove away.

The more desperate and physically fit tried to escape, but this contingency had been foreseen and the natural exits from the valley had been sealed by soldiers. To prevent mass breakouts various camping sites were surrounded, but a few still managed to slip through and find temporary refuge high on the mountain slopes.

To an uninformed onlooker, what was happening in the valley could have looked like a prelude to the end of the world. Every hour church services were held and people went to confession, received absolution for their sins, and had communion in preparation for death. As usual, the trucks came and delivered the food rations. No one went to unload them or arrange the distribution. The soldiers left everything in a pile and there the food remained.

On May 30, 1945, Major Davis announced that repatriation would commence the following day, and the Cossacks made plans to meet the threat.

In Peggetz the men primarily responsible for planning the safety of the thousands were a Colonel Sukhanov, a former member of Domanov's staff and one of the few officers who did not attend the fateful "conference"; Father Vasiliy Grigoriyev; and the acting Ataman Sergeant Kuzma Tolunin.

Their plan was a simple one. When dawn broke all the camp inmates and those families living near-

by were to gather on the camp green. The cadets from the Cossack School, together with the surviving members of the Fourth Don Regiment, were to surround everyone and, with linked arms, offer passive resistance to the repatriators. A special unit of the Fourth Regiment was to stay hidden among the crowd until any part of the protective circle was broken, when it would rush forward and fill the gaps. One thing was emphasized when details of the plan were rushed to the cadets and the Fourth Don. On no account, irrespective of the provocation they might have to endure, was any man to strike a British soldier throughout the operation.

The plan was not needed the next day because new orders were received from the British HQ, stating that as the Thirty-first was a Roman Catholic holiday the repatriation could not commence until June 1.

The hunger strike and escaping went on, yet an ugly rumor began to circulate to the effect that Father Grigoriyev, who had on several occasions been summoned to meet Major Davis at the latter's office to discuss certain routine matters, had agreed to help the British extradite the Cossacks without undue difficulty. When the rumor reached his ears, the priest announced, through his liaison men located throughout the camp, that he would answer that base charge and also give a full report on the situation after the Liturgy.

At the appointed time thousands of people

gathered in and around the church and, during the service, which was celebrated by all the priests, more people went to confession and received communion. It was during the sermon that Father Grigoriyev not only exonerated himself but branded the originators of the charge against him as Soviet *agents provocateur,* who were trying to undermine his authority so that any organized resistance would be impossible.

When the service was over the clergy led the multitude in procession to the camp green, and there Father Grigoriyev read a new petition which he subsequently handed to Major Davis.

This petition explained that all the camp inmates were natives of the various Cossack voiskos and were the irreconcilable enemies of the Communist creed; a manifestation that the Cossacks had fought since it made its appearance inside Russia. It stressed that many of them had seen the inside of Red prisons and concentration camps; that they had been repressed as *kulaks;*[1] that they had been deprived of their electoral rights and the means to earn a living and that they had arrived, in the last few months of the war, in Austria after a long march from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and other countries currently occupied by the Red Army.

The petition stated how many of those at Camp Peggetz were former members of the White Armies,

[1] *Kulaks*—allegedly rich peasants, but a term generally applied to anyone who resisted the forced collectivization of the land.

and if any of them had taken part in the war against the Soviet Union with German aid they had done so because they believed it right to try and destroy Communism which was a menace to the entire world.

In conclusion it expressed the common desire that, if they were to be punished, the British should sentence them to hard labor in the West rather than deliver them to a cruel enemy who was bent upon inflicting a prolonged and painful death.

When he had finished reading Father Grigoriyev proposed that on the first day of repatriation all should gather on the green, where a temporary altar would be erected and all the camp icons displayed. The crowd dispersed slowly, but the priests went back to the church and took it in turns to conduct short services until nightfall. In the interim the cadets went to all the huts and carts in and outside the camp confines, telling the people that at daybreak they must all gather on the green, where it would be easier to offer passive resistance if the troops were ordered to use force against them.

Under the cover of night a few managed to escape, more spent the hours in prayer, but none slept. Just before dawn everyone knew that June 1, 1945, would be the day of extradition; that the British would not tolerate further delay. Their evidence to support this was a long train, the first since the end of the war, which rumbled past them in the

direction of Lienz, and they all knew why it was making the journey.

At five o'clock in the morning the priests asked the British camp commandant for permission to hold an open-air service. Permission was granted.

From all parts of the camp, and from the outside, processions, led by priests or men carrying icons or religious banners and singing Easter hymns, converged on the green. Many of the icons had been priceless family or stanitza possessions that had been buried for years to prevent the Communists from finding and destroying them and dug up with the arrival of the Germans and carried west, into exile.

By 6:00 A.M. the green was packed and twelve members of the clergy, their number being limited by the chalices available, commenced the Communion Service.

It promised to be a beautiful summer's day. The larks hovered high overhead, and the morning sun danced over the snow-covered peaks of the surrounding mountains, which in turn reflected the rays onto the vividly green trees at the lower levels.

Half an hour later the cadets and the men of the Fourth Regiment marched to the green with their priests at their head, and without any fuss or shouted orders took up their positions in a human chain around the praying mass.

At 7:30 A.M., with confessions and communion over and a *panikhida*[2] under way, Major Davis and

[2] *Panikhida*—a memorial service for the dead, themselves, and for the salvation of their souls when life had been extinguished.

the acting Ataman drove up and surveyed the scene. No one looked up at them, except those members of the protective chain who were guarding the land nearest to them, and then the car was driven away.

In whispers the news was passed from one to the other, "Major Davis has left so perhaps we will be safe."

Their hopes were quickly dashed to the ground as a convoy of trucks drove into the camp at the gate nearest to the railway, and then they saw behind them jeeps, armed motorcyclists, and Bren gun carriers. An awful moan was dragged from the throats of the congregation, and the sound of crying became deafening.

Soldiers, armed with automatic rifles with fixed bayonets and batons, jumped out of the trucks and stood awaiting their orders. While they stood motionless more troops were completing the maneuver of encirclement on three sides of the green. There was no reason for them to worry about the fourth and remaining side, because that avenue of escape was blocked by the turbulent river Drava.

A British officer addressed the men as two aircraft flew overhead, the noise of their engines drowning out the wails. The minutes ticked by. Two choirs, one belonging to the Kuban Cossacks and the other to the massed church choir, started to sing the "Our Father," and within seconds thousands of voices took up the strains of the hymn of faith.

It was in the middle of the sung prayer that the troops began to advance on two sides. Shots were fired over the heads of the Cossacks and at their feet. Odd bullets ricocheted and found targets among the defenseless. The people huddled closer together. On came the soldiers, and the defense line braced itself as rifle butts and batons beat down on them.

Two columns of repatriators managed to breach the circle and plow in, cutting out small groups that could be caught easily and loaded into the trucks. People fell unconscious; they had either fainted or were concussed, their heads cut open. As they fell they were picked up and unceremoniously thrown into the vehicles.

One of the first casualties was a Don Cossack who was nearest to the advancing repatriators. He was killed by a bayonet thrust. In a matter of seconds the cadets ceased to be boys and became men. Not only did they defend themselves against the crushing batons but they did everything in their power to protect the old men, the women, and the children who were in danger. There were cases when the cadets rescued semiconscious Cossacks from the arms of the British soldiers, who were carting them to join other unfortunates.

The noise became unbearable. Shots were fired, but the only way the Cossacks knew this was by seeing the puffs of smoke belch out of the rifle muzzles.

As each truck was filled it was driven away to a nearby railroad siding, where the victims were stuffed into cattle cars and the doors tightly bound with barbed wire. The trucks then returned for another load.

Portable loudspeakers joined in the melee as they called upon the people, in Russian, to cease resistance. The unseen voice told them that, if their consciences were clear, they had nothing to fear by going home, and in any case they would find life easier in the Soviet Union than living as penniless refugees in an alien country.

The altar was overturned by the pressure of people being pushed against it. Little children's screams were lost in the overall horror as they were trampled underfoot.

Another car arrived to be stationed alongside the waiting British transport, only this time it was not another carrier of death. It was a medical car from the Cossack hospital, presumably summoned by Major Davis. Yet there was not much the lady doctor, Vera Petrovna Kasinov-Razuvayeva, could do in the presence of unlimited physical destruction. Nevertheless, she tried to help all the wounded even though her work was thankless, for as soon as she had patched a patient up he or she was thrown into a truck and carted to the railroad.

In protest against the horror, the little church in Dölsach began to toll a death knell and this was quickly taken up by all the churches in the valley.

But, instead of abating, the struggle became intensified because the troops had received reinforcements and some tanks approached from Dölsach.

One section of the crowd found itself hemmed in along the banks of the Drava, which had a small wooden bridge over it. Those nearest to it streamed across only to find that a nest of British soldiers was hidden on the other side. Further down a handful jumped into the river and tried to swim across. They were caught by the current, dragged downstream, and drowned. An unknown woman at the water's edge pushed one of her young daughters into the river. Her other daughter, barely more than a baby, clung to her skirt and legs, but her mother pried her her loose and threw her in, too. Then, after making the sign of the cross, she followed her children into a watery grave. Another woman followed her example. Holding her baby tightly in her arms, she jumped into the river and sank like a stone.

The two choirs found themselves nearest to the repatriators at one stage. A middle-aged Kuban Cossack, who stood holding an icon of Our Lady, was struck over the head with a rifle butt. Part of his scalp fell away from his skull, and blood gushed over his clothes and the icon as he was rushed away by his captors. Another Kuban Cossack standing near him was carrying the banner of St. Nicholas, which had been in his native stanitza of Eketerinovskaya. He tried to prevent a soldier

from grabbing it. A bayonet ripped it in twain. With a scream of rage and sorrow the Cossack thrust the pole into the offender's stomach and escaped into the middle of a large group.

When a priest bedecked in his vestments found himself isolated with a handful of his flock and penned against a wooden fence, he lifted his crucifix and blessed the soldiers who fought their way through to seize him. Seeing his plight, a squad of cadets and men from the Fourth Regiment tried to prevent him being taken, but they were smashed aside and a groan from hundreds of throats marked his capture.

When the Cossacks saw the priest being led away and thrown into a truck, what had been moans of anguish turned to screams of anger. The soldiers in the area were frightened by this change of mood and leveled their rifles. Those Cossacks nearest the troops tried to get out of the line of fire, and for the very first time a tremor of panic crept into their ranks. A young Terek Cossack, appreciating that if panic took a further hold resistance would collapse, rushed out, right into range of the rifle muzzles, and shouted for everyone to remain calm. Few, if any, could hear what he said, but his action and gestures had the desired effect.

At that moment some of the defenders reversed the situation and broke through the ranks of the repatriating force, and a wave of Cossacks followed them, pushing down a hedge as they stampeded.

As a result of that, certain individuals managed to reach the foothills, but not many as more troops had been concealed in the high cornfield beyond and they stopped the rush. And out of the few that did escape more than half committed suicide by hanging themselves from the trees.

Isolated soldiers opened fire on the Cossacks through fear. People began to commit suicide where they stood. Cossacks killed their wives and children and then themselves. As the Bren gun carriers advanced to compress the crowd into a tighter mass, those people who were unable to get out of their path perished under the tracks. One of those who died in this manner was a senior cadet.

With the continuation of the terror another wave of suicides took place. A mother threw her baby under the tracks of a Bren gun carrier (some say it was a tank), and before it had time to grind to a stop she followed. Since these events took place, it has been reliably estimated that more than one hundred Cossacks took their own lives that day at Camp Peggetz.

At one stage two Cossacks approached a British officer, who stood watching the "battle" from a patrol car. One of the men lifted his arm and in a calm voice spoke in Russian. The officer asked his interpreter to translate what he said. Before a translation could be made both men tossed their heads back and slashed their throats, cutting the jugular veins. They fell in a twitching, dying heap

at the officer's feet. Their message was simple: "Our blood is on you and your children."

Weakened by the hunger strike and parched through lack of water, their resistance slowly declined as the repatriation continued. But right to the end the majority remained praying.

The Cossack Red Cross car drove around the green, picking up the unconscious, and some British soldiers forgot about their unpleasant task and tried to comfort lost little children by giving them chocolate and crooning soft words of sympathy. Their efforts had little effect. The children were terrified beyond pacification. They had lost their parents, perhaps forever.

There was the case of a British soldier who led a woman with a baby in her arms from the fringes of the mass. The child had received a scratch on its arm, so the soldier bound it with a bandage from his first-aid kit, gave it a drink of water from his water bottle, and then, despite the mother's protests, put them both onto a truck.

Another case was that of a soldier in a Bren gun carrier who shouted to the Cossacks in German, "Don't consent to be repatriated and don't be frightened of us. If they order us to run you down, we will have to come forward but we will only come close to you and then stop. You have nothing to fear from us."

Also on record is how a little girl emerged from the multitude and went up to a man in a Bren gun

carrier and gave him a letter written by her mother in English. It read: "It would be better if you shot my parents and I now rather than send us back. In either case we shall all die." The soldier read it and passed it to his companion. They patted her cheek and spoke kindly to her. She did not understand a word they said, but their sympathy was evident as one of them was openly crying as he watched her go back to join the others.

Throughout the operation local Austrians witnessed the massacre from higher vantage points, and to make a permanent record of the day a British military camera crew worked unceasingly.

Then, for some obscure reason, the congregation was left to pray in peace and recover its equilibrium. The soldiers turned their attention to the huts, which they swept through pulling out those who had tried to hide. During the calm on the green the first trainload of Cossacks, consisting of approximately sixty freight cars, pulled out on its journey to the U.S.S.R. All the car doors were sealed, but from small, grilled windows white handkerchiefs waved in farewell. There is no record as to how many trains left the Drava Valley that day.

In the middle of the afternoon a car drove up and stopped between the camp and the remaining Cossacks. Three people were in it. A stout British officer, his interpreter, and a driver. Using a portable loudspeaker, the officer, through his interpreter, called upon Maria Ivanovna Domanova, the wife

of General Domanov, to step forward as he had something important to say to her.

Out of the crowd a voice replied, "She is not here."

The request was repeated and, when she did not appear, the officer went to to say, "Cossacks, I admire your heroism, but it is all without purpose. According to the terms of the Yalta Agreement, all those people who were resident in the Soviet Union on September 1, 1939, must be repatriated without regard for individual wishes."

When that was interpreted into Russian, the crowd began to shout. It was the first time that any British officer or soldier had told them that only the new *émigrés,* or Soviet Russians, had to be extradited.

Putting up his hand for silence, the officer asked for someone to come forward and act as spokesman for them all. "I cannot listen to you all shouting at the same time," he added.

Colonel Sukhanov and a Kuban priest marched smartly forward, and the former saluted.

"Are you in command of this force?"

With hardly a trace of a Russian accent, Sukhanov replied in English that he was the senior officer present if that would suffice.

"Then why are you ordering your people to resist us?" the officer asked.

"We would all prefer to die here than at the hands of the Communists, whom we have fought since 1917.

"Some of us were compelled to leave Russia in 1920, but our kinsmen who are our friends have experienced the foulness of Communism and were determined to profit by the German invasion.

"Together we have all come to the West to avoid the Red Army, in the hope we would ultimately reach the territory occupied by the United States or Great Britain, countries whose governments would offer us asylum as political refugees.

"Our hopes have not been fulfilled, and none of us can understand why you are treating us like this. If you were the Soviets, it would be different. They know that we are their enemies, and when they catch us we will die. That is why we prefer to be killed by you rather than submit and return there."

The officer listened to all that Sukhanov said, but his reply was without any glimmer of hope. "The decisions of the Yalta Agreement must be fulfilled, and there is nothing I can do to help you. However, what I do propose is that all of you who left the Soviet Union before September 1, 1939, and have documents to prove it, should stand over there," and he pointed to an open space.

This conversation was repeated by the interpreter for the benefit of the Kuban priest, who did not understand English. Three families standing within earshot went over to the space indicated, but the mass stayed where they were.

"All of you can go back to your barracks or camps," the officer continued. "There will be no

more repatriations today." Having said that, he waved a small flag and the British troops formed up and began to march off. The Bren gun carriers and the tanks withdrew in the direction of Dölsach. Without any warning two men ran forward and flung themselves under the retreating armor and were squashed before the drivers could apply the brakes.

Despite the promise that nothing else would happen that day, not one Cossack moved away from the green. The officer then said to Sukhanov, "Your people do not wish to disperse. Evidently they are afraid that our men will seize them as they get back to their huts or carts. I would like you to assure them, on my behalf, that no further acts of extradition will take place except in the case of war criminals and former Soviet citizens."

"You are only one officer, sir, and others may try and carry out repatriation on orders from your headquarters." And without a trace of malice in his voice Sukhanov added, "How can we accept your word? In any case there are no war criminals among us."

With a nod of understanding the British officer replied, "We have made a grave mistake today by not first ascertaining who were Soviet citizens liable to extradition, but from now on we will make amends.

"Tell them to go home and we will see which of you we can keep as refugees. The others, the Soviet

citizens, should be ready to go back to the U.S.S.R. at 8:00 A.M. tomorrow." He then ordered his driver to leave.

It was only when there was not a single British soldier left in sight that the Cossacks began to disperse, leaving behind them the bodies of their dead. Those who had been hiding in the woods and in the long corn emerged and went back to the camp or their carts.

Many were reconciled to their fate, and to make sure that their horses did not starve they set them free. Later the Austrians were forced to organize horse hunts as the stray animals were ruining their crops.

All that night of June 1-2, 1945, while the darkness was orchestrated with the neighing of horses and the bark of camels, the inmates of Camp Peggetz were screened. Those who could prove that they had left the Soviet Union prior to September, 1939, were allowed the freedom of the camp. The remainder were isolated in preparation for further repatriation. Unfortunately there were cases when soldiers must have taken a personal dislike to certain Cossacks and torn up their priceless documents, which were their only guarantee of freedom.

A number used the protective shroud of night to escape into the mountains, their bundles strapped to their backs. Yet the night was used for other purposes too. For, despite the promise that no one would be extradited, that night groups of British

soldiers came back to the camp and seized various individuals, among them the two priests who had led the resistance earlier in the day. The repatriators found them hidden inside the altar of the camp church when it was destroyed in an effort to locate them.

What happened at Camp Peggetz was but one phase of the tragedy. On the same day, June 1, throughout the length of the Drava Valley, wherever Cossacks were living, forcible repatriation took place with the same hideous consequences.

When British troops arrived at the billet of the Third Kuban Regiment and found the Cossacks and their dependents at prayer, a fusillade of bullets ripped into them to make them more amenable to extradition. The men of the First and Second Don Regiments received the same treatment when they ignored orders to embark in trucks and continued praying on their knees.

In a space of hours nearly all the once orderly settlements had been depopulated, semiwrecked, and left in shambles. Thought of gain attracted human vultures; some of the local inhabitants went from cart to cart, all along the riverbank, looting in an orgy that was to last for more than a week. The military authorities turned a blind eye to the marauders, and it was left to the Austrian village clergy to try to stop the pillaging. In their daily sermons and as they visited their flock, they told the people that they must not take anything that

had once belonged to the Cossacks because it was unclean and stained with the blood of innocent people. Their efforts were not a complete success, and plundering continued.

Next day, June 2, 1945, the inmates of Camp Peggetz and at least one other large settlement received a shock when the soldiers arrived. Their nerves were tensed to withstand the inevitable. Then the news was announced. There would be no repatriations that day; the screening would continue. Unfortunately the truce did not extend to them all. Further downstream the Bren gun carriers and troops employed the tactics of June 1.

Those Cossacks who had camped in isolated places when they saw what was happening to the others tried to hide in the thickets. One woman was betrayed by her beloved dog, who barked when soldiers tried to flush out escapers. She was killed as a stream of bullets was fired in the dog's general direction.

A Cossack who was receiving treatment in the hospital at Lienz flung himself through the window when British soldiers arrived to repatriate him, and an engineer from Novotcherkassk shot his twelve-year-old son, his year-old daughter, his wife, and finally committed suicide.

People who were standing on the banks of the Drava saw with horror a woman being swept downstream, with a baby strapped to her chest. The little child was weakly waving its arms and crying

as the cold water spilled over it. Two more women's bodies floated down. All of them were fished out. The first woman was found to be still alive, although the baby had drowned just before the rescue. One of the other women was revived after artificial respiration. She was Dr. Voskobinnikova, and instead of thanking her rescuers she reproached them. Earlier she had killed her fourteen-year-old daughter and aged mother with overdoses of morphia, and because she wanted only to join them in death she died before nightfall.

Near Dölsach a backwater of the river became clogged with bodies, and the vegetable gardens were in danger of being flooded. The parish priest tolled the church bell to summon the men of the village to help him drag the bodies out and accord the victims a decent, Christian burial. One grave in the village was right on the riverbank and was carefully tended all that year. Next spring, with the melting snow floods, the body and grave disappeared.

The repatriation of the Fourth Terek Regiment and the Caucasian Highlanders began at 5:00 P.M. It is believed that 10 per cent of the Terek Cossacks managed to escape before the British arrived, but their escape was not easy. Both ends of the valley were still kept sealed.

A group of escapers from the Terek Regiment watched their comrades beaten into submission, although little or no resistance was offered, and later the same day they learned, from a few more who

escaped, that the survivors would be sent back on the following day, June 4, which was to prove the last day of repatriation. After that small squads of soldiers began the search for fugitives.

Sixty-odd members of the Terek Regiment started to walk south in the hope of reaching Italy. They were spotted by a low-flying aircraft as they passed over a snowfield. The pilot opened fire on them and wounded one of them, and then he kept circling until a squad of soldiers from Lienz arrived to take them back to a heavily guarded camp.

It should be pointed out at this stage of the narrative that it was only on June 2, 1945, when the Cossack soldiers arrived at the railhead for transportation to the U.S.S.R., that they were asked for the first time if they could prove if they were old *émigrés.*

The men and dependents at the railhead who could prove they had never been Soviet citizens were allowed to return to Camp Peggetz and be accepted as displaced persons. Yet far too many old *émigrés* who should have been accorded asylum were sent to the Soviet Union via Graz, because they had either lost the pertinent documents or could not find people to verify their claims. Equally there were numerous cases where new *émigrés,* Soviet citizens, claimed old *émigrés* status and received support from those who could prove it, but when it became obvious to the examining soldiers that un-

authorized Cossacks were making false claims they began to disbelieve even bona fide cases.

At a few settlements on June 2 sufficient food was delivered to last the occupants three days, and British officers requested the settlement leaders to compile lists of all present, giving their names, dates and places of birth. This was obviously meant to help them in sorting out the old from the new *émigrés*. But the lists were found to be useless. Fearing that they would eventually fall into Soviet hands and their relatives in the U.S.S.R. would suffer as a result, the Cossacks entered false data on the lists.

June 3, the next to the last day of the extraditions from that area, the Cossacks gathered together small bundles of their dearest possessions which they wanted to take back to the East, to the Soviet Union. They rebuilt the wrecked field altars and made sure that the icons and church banners were prominently displayed.

In the early hours of the following morning those who remained along the Drava and were destined to be sent "home" gathered for their last church service as free people. At 9:00 A.M. the troops came. There was no opposition. At the Terek-Stavropolskaya camp the people kissed their friends and climbed into the trucks when they were ordered to do so, shouting their farewells to those whose turn to follow would come all too quickly.

By nightfall on June 4, 1945, the Drava Valley,

a stretch of fifteen miles from Lienz to Oberdrauburg, was like a deserted battlefield. Parts of uniforms lay scattered around. Shallow graves marked with simple wooden crosses, frequently just branches of trees tied together, recorded the last resting places of those who came from the East to the West, looking for liberty. The only signs of life appeared to be those of the Austrian vultures, a very small percentage of the population, who walked around wearing Cossack hats and capes, leading horses and dragging handcarts piled high with what they considered to be valuable loot.

To date no one knows how many unfortunate people met their fates at the hands of the repatriators, how many committed suicide, or the number delivered to the Red Army.

According to Lieutenant Colonel G. I. Malcolm, in his book *History of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders,* 15,000 men, 4,000 women, and 2,500 children were gathered in the valley, and the majority were repatriated.

This is an underestimation. General Naumenko, who has made a complete and documented study of this little-known episode of World War II, states that the Cossack Land numbered forty thousand people on June 1, 1945, and at least thirty thousand people of both sexes and all ages were handed over to the Soviets. These figures do not take into consideration the men of the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry

Corps which was extradited from Carinthia, southern Austria.

At this stage only one question remains to be answered: What happened to those who were sent home by the British forces in May-June, 1945?

Colonel General Golikov, who was the Soviet officer charged with the repatriation of all Soviet citizens, reported that by October 1, 1945, 5,236,130 Soviet citizens had been sent back to the "Motherland" with Western help. He went on to say that out of that number 1,645,633 had found employment, and that 750,000 were still waiting for jobs. Golikov glossed over what had happened to the remaining, unaccounted for, nearly three million repatriates, because they were, without exception, either executed, died on the way home, or were sent to concentration camps in the wastes of Central Russia or Siberia.

A small indication as to their treatment and fate was provided by a German soldier who was taken prisoner by the Soviets and who has since returned to West Germany. He was one of many German prisoners forced to dig deep trenches outside the town of Sverdlovsk, which was the control point for all those extradited from the West and on their way to slave labor camps.

When the trainloads of Cossacks arrived near Sverdlovsk, they were divided into groups, the physically fit and the sick. The latter were led out to the trenches and mown down with machine guns.

The healthy men were retrained and sent to work until death claimed them.

Several months after the forcible extradition of the Cossacks from Camp Peggetz, those people still living in the camp were given permission by its British commandant, Major Richards, to erect a monument to those who had died on June 1, 1945.

Six years after that a new memorial, financed by Cossacks from all over the free world, was erected on the same site and is the scene of many a pilgrimage today.

While describing the forcible repatriation from Camp Peggetz I have referred to Bren gun carriers being present because eyewitnesses have, during the course of telling me what happened, described them as "tanks" and "tankets" (little tanks). It is quite possible that both tanks and Bren gun carriers were present during the operation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GREAT MYSTERY

(The extradition of the Cossacks is inseparably bound up with the forcible repatriation of all Russian anti-Communists. For this reason, and to prove that the British were not alone in carrying out a policy which was contrary—to say the least—to the common laws of humanity, it is necessary to divide this chapter into two separate parts. By doing this the overall picture of what went on behind the scenes will be exposed.)

FOR THE LAST eighteen years the subject of forcible repatriation by the Western Allies has been a closely guarded secret.

On February 8, 1955, Congressman Albert H. Bosch (Republican, New York) called upon Congress in his House Resolution 137 to form a select committee to investigate all aspects of "Operation Keelhaul," the forcible repatriation to the Soviet Union of untold thousands of anti-Communist men, women, and children by American military and civilian personnel between the years 1945-47.

From that moment onward the Bosch Resolution has been completely ignored, and this is the final link in a whole chain of mystery that surrounds

the subject which, even today, is still classified as "Top Secret" by the Pentagon.[1]

The first shot in what was to become a barrage of lies was fired prior to the launching of the Second Front in Europe, when Soviet representatives at General Eisenhower's headquarters, SHAEF, stated that there were no Russians serving in German uniform.[2]

Major General John R. Deane wrote: "About four months after the invasion we had accumulated twenty-eight thousand Russians in German uniform."[3]

At the time of the Soviet statement there were more than one million Russians fighting alongside the Germans in an attempt to liberate their Motherland,[4] and the majority considered themselves to be an integral part of the "Russian Liberation Army" (Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Armia), which was more commonly known by its Russian initials, ROA. Its commander was a former Red Army Lieutenant General Andrei A. Vlasov, who for his brilliant defense of Moscow in the winter of 1941-42 was decorated by Stalin with the Order of the Red Banner.

Adding confusion to the subject of forcible repatriation of the ROA and the Cossacks is the way contemporary historians have tended to ignore the

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[1] See "An American Crime" by Julius Epstein, *National Review*, December 21, 1955, p. 20.

[2] *The Strange Alliance* by Major General John R. Deane, (New York: Viking Press, 1947).

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] A figure given by the United Nations.

very existence of this Russian opposition to Communism. As a result of this self-imposed blindness, the myth of Soviet-Russian solidarity is perpetuated, and when Khrushchev threatens the West everyone sees him as the spokesman for two hundred million Russians, whereas he speaks for only a small percentage of the population. For the same reason the history of the second World War contains many myths.

To quote an example of the way history has been falsely recorded, we are told that Prague was liberated by the Red Army under the command of Marshal Konev. In reality the Red Army betrayed the Czechs, as American troops in Czechoslovakia were also forced to do.

When the Czech people revolted in May, 1945, "Radio Prague" implored the Allies to come to their aid. The Red Army, only a forced march away, turned a deaf ear to their plea and adopted the Warsaw tactic of allowing the Czech patriots, most of whom were anti-Communists, to be slaughtered so as to reduce opposition to the eventual Communist enslavement of the country.

On the other hand, the American Army under General Patton was most anxious to render all the help it could, and Patton made preparations to send his tanks into Prague as a relief force; but for some obscure reason the Western Allied Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, forbade him to go to the Czech's aid.

However, fortunately for that small nation, there was a third force which heard their SOS, the First Division of the ROA under the command of General Buniachenko, and it was the Free Russians who battled their way into the city, routed the Germans, and saved its inhabitants from severe reprisals at the hands of massing S.S. units. As a token of national appreciation, "Radio Prague" repeatedly broadcast throughout May 6, 7, and 8, 1945, "Hail to General Vlasov the Liberator of Prague."

Yet the victory and praise were not to bring respite to the men of the ROA. For while the ROA was in Prague General Vlasov learned that the city was destined to be occupied by the Red Army. Knowing what it would mean to his men if they were caught by the Soviets, he ordered the division to withdraw and fight its way through to the American lines, to surrender and ask for political asylum.

To expedite the surrender of his forces Vlasov sent two trusted emissaries, Russian-born Captain Wilfred Strik-Strikfeld and General of the ROA Vasilii F. Malyshkin, to conduct negotiations with the nearest United States commander. Upon their arrival in the American lines, the two men were blindfolded and taken to a Divisional Staff headquarters, where it was first debated whether they should be handed over to the Soviets without further delay. Ultimately they were taken to see General Patch commanding the Seventh Army. Malyshkin eloquently pleaded the cause of the Vlasov troops and

asked that they be allowed to surrender and be granted political asylum.

Apparently impressed with all that Malyshkin said, General Patch answered that he could not make any decision without consulting General Eisenhower. Eisenhower's reply was relayed to the two mediators in these words: "General Eisenhower cannot, unfortunately, give an answer to your request. The decision can only come from Washington and then it will be final. Nevertheless, the Vlasov divisions can surrender, and until a decision does arrive the men will be treated as German POWs." Strik-Strikfeld then inquired if the ROA soldiers would be treated as prisoners of war under the terms of the Geneva Convention. The answer was an emphatic "No."[5]

At the end of their talks General Patch informed the two officers that they would be escorted back to their own lines to inform Vlasov as to the outcome. For twenty-four hours they were held at Seventh Army headquarters under various pretexts, and then a new order arrived. Instead of being treated as officers negotiating a surrender under the universally recognized rules of warfare, they were put into a POW camp.[6]

While that drama was being enacted Major Gen-

[5] Translation from the Paris weekly newspaper *Rivarol*, "Vlasov Could Have Won the War Against Stalin" pp. 9 and 10, December 4, 1953. Also translation from *Wen Sie Verderben Wollen* by Jurgen Thorwald (Stuttgart, Germany: Steinbrüben Verlag, 1952).

[6] *Wen Sie Verderben Wollen* (Stuttgart, Germany, 1952).

eral Aschenbrenner, a former German Air Attaché in Moscow, also acting on Vlasov's behalf, failed to make contact with the British, but he did manage to reach General Patton. They had a long talk, and as a result Patton expressed the desire to meet Vlasov personally. The meeting never took place. General Eisenhower ordered Patton to have no dealings with the ROA.[7]

After a forced march from Prague, the First ROA Division surrendered to United States units on May 10, 1945, twenty miles southwest of Pribram. The troops were disarmed but, instead of being treated as prisoners of war, the commanding officer, General Buniachenko, was told that when the American forces retired to a new Soviet-American demarcation line they were to be left behind, at the mercy of the Red Army. This meant that most of the Free Russians who were unable to escape independently to the West, and their number was very small, were heinously handed over to the Communists who, without any formalities, commenced to execute and terrorize them.[8]

That betrayal of the Vlasov troops, which must have been sanctioned by the Supreme Commander, was in direct contradiction to his earlier promise made to Strik-Strikfeld and Malyshkin, via General Patch, to the effect that they would be treated

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] An unpublished manuscript in my possession written by a leading member of the ROA and a close associate of Vlasov.

as German POW's pending Washington's decision, which we know from subsequent information had not arrived at that date.

The day before, on May 9, 1945, General Vlasov and his personal staff surrendered to men of the American Third Army near Pilsen. During an interrogation by an unknown general, he requested that his men be granted political asylum and not be handed over to the Soviets. He reiterated this request in letters to General Eisenhower and the heads of various Western governments. In each he pointed out that the men of the ROA could not be held responsible, and that he and other senior officers were fully prepared to stand trial before an International Military Tribunal to answer charges that might be preferred against them or the ROA.

His letters and appeals went unanswered. Then, three days later, on May 12, 1945, while he was being held a prisoner in a picturesque castle near the small Czech town of Schlüsselburg, he was informed that he was to attend a top-level conference at Army headquarters.

At 2:00 P.M. Generals Vlasov and Buniachenko, together with other ROA officers, set out for the conference in a convoy of cars guarded by two tanks and an armored car. They had only traveled a few miles before they were overtaken by a Red Army truck that had been awaiting their departure outside the castle gates all morning. A brief conversation ensued between Red Army officers and the

two senior American officers, and as a result Vlasov, Buniachenko, and most of their entourage were handed over to the Soviets.[9]

Two months later, in July, 1945, an official American-German newspaper announced: "The traitor General Vlasov was arrested while trying to escape to the American Zone and was extradited to the Soviets."[10]

That pointless lie issued by the Office of War Information confirms, when one remembers how the Cossack officers in Lienz, Austria, were invited by the British to attend a "conference," that it was a stratagem agreed to by General Eisenhower and transmitted by SHAEF to all Western Allied commanders as a means of extraditing senior Free Russian officers without alarming them or their men.

The method used to extradite Vlasov brought about the fulfillment of a premonition he had had more than a year before. While discussing the West he said, "These Anglo-Saxons adore Stalin—believe me. They adore the Soviet regime. They imagine that our country, after the war, will develop into what they call democracy. . . . You hate the Germans and you have every reason to for what they have done to our country. . . . But do you really

[9] "The Last Days of Vlasov" by an eyewitness, published in No. 1. of the *Russian Democrat,* 1948, and confirmed by Lieutenant Colonel Tenserov, Chief of the ROA's intelligence, who was present but managed to escape.

[10] Translated from the Russian *V Ugodu Stalinu* (To Content Stalin), a series of documents published by B. M. Kutznetsnov in New York.

believe you will find more understanding in America or England?"[11]

From May, 1945, onward, it was open season on Russian anti-Communists. This was the result of General Eisenhower permitting the G-5 (Civil) Division at SHAEF to issue a Restricted Order No. CA/d9 entitled "Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany." On page 22 of this document it read: "After identification by Soviet Repatriation Representatives displaced persons will be repatriated regardless of their individual wishes."

The "Guide" carefully pointed out that the forcible repatriation of East Europeans—for not only the Russians were involved in this—had been agreed upon by the Allied Powers at Yalta on February 11, 1945. That was yet another deliberate lie.

In a 156-page document, "The Recovery and Repatriation of Prisoners of War, Occupation Forces in Europe, 1945-46," compiled with the permission of the U.S. Army's Chief Historian, Colonel Harold E. Potter, by the Chief Archivist in Frankfurt-am-Main, Gillett Griswold, the truth emerges. On page 64 it states: "The principle of forcible repatriation of Soviet citizens was recognized in Supreme Headquarters in April, 1945. Although the Yalta Agreement did not contain any categorical statement that Soviet citizens should be repatriated regardless of their personal wishes, it was so interpreted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. On instructions from the

[11] The Paris newspaper *Rivarol*. See earlier footnote.

latter, Theater headquarters ordered repatriation regardless of the individual's desire with only two exceptions, namely, Soviet citizens captured while serving in the German armed forces and unwilling to resign their status as prisoners of war, and Soviet citizens known or suspected to be war criminals."

From that document it is seen quite clearly that General Eisenhower had no right whatsoever to extradite the First ROA Division, because its members had surrendered wearing the uniform of the German Wehrmacht and claimed POW status.

Yet, what is not generally known is that the Western Allied Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, had started his own policy of forcibly handing over Russian anti-Communists as early as June, 1944, seven months before the Yalta meeting.

The case I refer to happened in Italy, when an Azerbaijanian soldier serving in the German One Hundred and Sixty-second Infantry Division under the command of Lieutenant General Ralph von Heygendorf, a unit composed of Turkestani and Caucasian volunteers, was taken prisoner by American forces. This unfortunate man was sent, against his wish—and he too was wearing a German uniform —back to the U.S.S.R. via Palestine. The Kremlin sent him to a Siberian concentration camp. But shortly afterward he was forcibly enlisted into a Red punishment battalion to fight against the Germans.

Prisoners serving in the Red penal units were

always given the most dangerous assignments and were forbidden to take cover during an attack or while under attack. To insure that this order was strictly carried out armed political commissars were stationed in the immediate rear to shoot those who disobeyed.

During the heat of a battle the Azerbaijanian eluded the watchful eye of the commissar and escaped to the German lines, where, after interrogation, he was returned to his former regiment serving in Italy.[12]

To return to the SHAEF "Guide" which claimed that forcible repatriation had been agreed to at Yalta on February 11, 1945, there is additional proof that General Eisenhower knew this was not so and was previously collaborating with the British to extradite Russians.

On February 5, 1945, the then British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, now Lord Avon, wrote a letter to the United States Secretary of State: ". . . *It is clear, as SHAEF have already reported,* that the only solution to the problem of the Soviet citizens who are likely to fall into British and American hands shortly is to repatriate them as soon as possible. For this shipping is required, and *we have already sent 10,000 back from the United Kingdom and 7,500 from the Mediterranean.*

"It seems to me it would materially help the pro-

[12] Details from a letter written by Lieutenant General von Heygendorf to the Dutch journalist, Hans de Weerd.

posed negotiations if we could inform the Russians at a suitable moment of our plans to repatriate their citizens. From the British point of view, I can say that we have found shipping to send back from the United Kingdom a further 7,000 of these men during the latter part of this month and it is hoped that we can provide further ships to take some 4,000 a month from the Mediterranean during March, April and May...."[13]

This letter is further confirmation when considered alongside the case of the Azerbaijanian soldier forcibly repatriated with British assistance in June, 1943, that the Yalta Agreement did not specifically demand that all Russians be sent home but that the British Government, and General Eisenhower at SHAEF, had previously decided on that course of action.

Neither was the sea repatriation referred to by Mr. Eden a quiet and peaceful affair. "The British role, though secondary, was no sweeter. Thousands of Soviet prisoners taken to Britain were then forced to board British vessels to be sent to Odessa. Suicides abounded. Many jumped overboard and drowned. In one case it took three days in Odessa for Soviet police to drag the prisoners ashore."[14]

Only a Congressional inquiry can hope to ascertain why General Eisenhower adopted this policy

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[13] Extract from a letter from the Yalta documents published in the *New York Times*, March 17, 1955. Italics added.

[14] "How We Served as Partner in a Purge" by Julius Epstein in the *American Legion Magazine*, December, 1954.

because it was contrary to the Geneva Convention covering the treatment of prisoners of war and contrary to the policy of his own State Department.

In a letter dated February 1, 1945, to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, D.C., Mr. Nikolai Novikov, the Acting U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Joseph C. Grew, wrote:

> We will never return these people [the Russian anti-Communists]. We cannot repatriate these people because this would be a gross violation of the Geneva Convention. They were captured in German uniforms, and the Geneva Convention does not permit us to look behind the uniform....
>
> I would like to outline for you the reasons why, in the opinion of the American authorities, these persons cannot, without presenting serious difficulties, be delivered for shipment to the Soviet Union. It appears to the appropriate American authorities who have given most careful consideration to this situation, that the clear intention of the Convention [Geneva Convention covering the treatment of prisoners of war] is that prisoners of war shall be treated on the basis of the uniforms they are wearing when captured, and since the containing powers shall not look behind the uniforms to determine ultimate questions of citizenship or nationality....

In the same letter Mr. Grew continued:

> . . . There are numerous aliens in the United States Army, including citizens of enemy countries. The United States Government has taken the position that these persons are entitled to the full protection of the Geneva Convention and has informed the German Government over a year ago that all prisoners of war entitled to repatriation under the convention should be returned to the custody of the United States regardless of nationality.

In view of the fact that the United States has taken this position in regard to American prisoners in German hands, it is the opinion of competent American authorities, that if we should release from a prisoner of war status persons who claim protection under the Geneva Convention because they were captured in German uniforms as members of German formations, the German Government might be afforded a pretext to subject to reprisal American prisoners of war in German hands. . . .

Reverting once again to the notorious "Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany" issued by SHAEF. When General Patch received this he sent a signal to General Eisenhower on August 25, 1945, asking for a specific order to the effect that he must use his troops to forcibly hand over to the Soviets those unarmed POW's and civilians who refused to go to the U.S.S.R. voluntarily. SHAEF informed him that Eisenhower was not in a position to give such an order, but his message had been relayed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington.[15]

Months went by before Patch received an answer. For it was only on December 20, 1945, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that American troops were to use force wherever necessary.[16] And this delay presents two further mysteries.

First, it was on November 20, 1945, that President Truman appointed General Eisenhower as Chief of Staff of the Army,[17] and that meant that the officer

[15] "The Recovery and Repatriation of Prisoners of War, Occupation Forces in Europe, 1945-46."

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] The *New York Times,* November 21, 1945.

who had previously instituted a policy of forcible repatriation without any authority (Eisenhower) was placed in a position whereby he could legalize his actions.

Second, even before General Patch made his inquiry, what has now become known as the "Rape of Kempten" occurred, and this must have been sanctioned by the Western Allied Supreme Commander.

At a refugee camp in Kempton, southern Germany, where thousands of Russian refugees were located, it was announced on August 11, 1945, that on the following day 410 former Soviet citizens were to be sent back to the U.S.S.R. Panic reigned. Overnight many escaped. On the morning of the fateful twelfth those men and women due to be extradited went into the camp church to pray, armed with the knowledge that even the most disgusting criminal can seek sanctuary in the house of God.

The church was surrounded by a unit of American Military Police, and an officer entered requesting everyone to leave. Knowing what awaited them outside, the refugees refused and, at the same time, implored him not to send them back to the Soviets. He left without saying another word, and then the operation commenced. Using rifle butts, batons, and their fists, a squad of MP's burst into the church and either drove or dragged the people out. Shots were fired, people committed suicide, the altar was overturned, sacred objects were trampled underfoot, and

five hundred marks belonging to the church funds were stolen. Two people were seriously wounded in the melee, nine less seriously, and the priest who had tried to defend his frightened flock was so savagely beaten around the head that he was unconscious for a long time in hospital.

Out of the 410 listed for repatriation, only ninety were loaded, like cattle, into waiting trucks and driven to the railroad station under guard. Yet it must not be forgotten that none of the men, women, or children concerned in this roundup had fought against the Soviets or the Allies. Their only crime was to refuse to return to the Soviet Union and the Communist system that they hated.

One eyewitness to this revolting spectacle was the well-known American Negro Dr. Washington, who watched it all with tears streaming down his face.[18]

Two months before that, in June, 1945, two hundred Russians held prisoner at Fort Dix, New Jersey, fought so hard against forcible repatriation that a barbiturate was slipped into their coffee and they were carried aboard ship while still drugged. (The two hundred were survivors from an earlier forcible repatriation "battle" in Seattle, Washington.)[19]

In July, 1945, UNRRA took over from the G-5 (Civil) Division of SHAEF in dealing with refugees, but instead of rescinding the extradition by force order it, if anything, gave added impetus to it.

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[18] *Baseler Nachrichten,* October 2, 1945.

[19] Feature entitled "Urges Exposure of Repatriation of 200 to USSR" by Julius Epstein in *The Tablet,* Brooklyn, August 13, 1955.

". . . nobody carried out this harsh directive with more fiendish delight than a few fellow-travelers in our Military Government and UNRRA."[20]

The truth of this can be seen from details of what happened at Dachau, a scene of many a Nazi horror, on January 19, 1946.

In the camp were 270 former Vlasov officers and men, who were due to be repatriated. On the nineteenth they all gathered in one hut for mutual protection. Outside a battalion of Military Police, two tanks, and numerous machine guns were placed in strategic positions.

The Vlasovites were singing hymns when the MP's burst in wielding their batons, but the men formed a packed circle with linked arms and so prevented any of them being dragged outside. The MP's then withdrew. Tear-gas bombs were fired into the hut, and as they emerged they were beaten, bound, and thrown onto trucks. Inside they left behind them twenty-one seriously wounded comrades and twelve dead.[21]

An eyewitness account was published in the U.S. Army newspaper, the *Stars and Stripes,* January 23, 1946.

. . . "It just wasn't human," one guard said. "There were no men in that barracks when we reached it. They were animals. The GI's quickly cut down those who hanged themselves from the rafters. Those who were still conscious

[20] "These Russians Are on Our Side," James P. O'Donnell, *Saturday Evening Post,* June 6, 1953.

[21] *Russian Resurrection,* Paris, October 4, 1956.

were screaming in Russian, pointing first at the guns of the guards and then at themselves, begging to be shot.

"Even when we were trying to help and send them to hospital they refused to live. One had stabbed himself in the chest and seemed almost out when we put him on a litter and loaded him onto a truck. Every time he moved blood spurted from the wound. Two MP's could not subdue him. Two of them broke their billies hitting him on the head."

Similar tragedies, where troops were used, occurred at Plattling, Germany, on May 13, and 24, 1946, even though Colonel Gillis, the former camp commandant, had promised the three thousand Vlasovists that they would not be extradited, and at Bad Eibling, Germany, on August 21, 1946.

In a letter dated March 12, 1954, Senator Herbert Lehman, the first Director General of UNRRA, wrote to the well-known American journalist Julius Epstein that neither he nor his successor, the late Fiorello LaGuardia, had permitted forcible repatriation. Senator Lehman must either have forgotten what really happened or he did not know what his own staff in Europe was doing.

The role of UNRRA in riding herd on Stalin's enemies, both under Herbert Lehman and Fiorello LaGuardia, was hardly one to make Americans proud of their statesmen. LaGuardia in particular showed himself insensitive to the fears and grievances of the Kremlin's runaway subjects. Since UNRRA was widely infiltrated by Communists and fellow travelers in any case, the plight of would-be non-returners was far from enviable.[22]

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[22] Eugene Lyons in his book *Our Secret Allies* (London: Arco Publications, 1954).

And it was from LaGuardia that UNRRA received, according to Eugene Lyons in his book *Our Secret Allies,* the infamous Order No. 199, which "not only instructed DP camp officials to effect a 'speedy return' of Soviet nationals to their homeland in accordance with the Yalta Agreement, but outlined pressures and hinted at punishments toward that end."

Long after these events took place General Eisenhower apparently regretted his role in "Operation Keelhaul," for on pages 485-86 of his book *Crusade in Europe* he wrote that those anti-Communists who did not wish to return to the Soviet Union "were given the benefit of the doubt" and were not forcibly sent back. This statement is not, as I have clearly shown, in accord with known facts.

Over the years statesmen and officers of many countries have conveniently blamed the Yalta Agreement for the forcible repatriation policy, and those who took part in it claim they were only following orders. However, when the U.S. Army released its report *The Recovery and Repatriation of Prisoners of War, Occupation Forces in Europe, 1945-46,* and proved that the Yalta meeting was not responsible, a new excuse was offered. This time it was claimed that the Vlasov troops were traitors to a wartime ally and therefore had to be returned by the most expedient method to face trial.

James P. O'Donnell answered the accusation that Vlasov was a Russian quisling. "A fairer historical

parallel would have been Polish Marshal Pilsudski, who achieved the independence of Poland in World War I by playing Imperial Germany off against Czarist Russia, and then turning against the Germans. Vlasov's dream was more vain than ignoble. He was one of history's premature anti-Communazis."[23]

Speaking to an American officer at Plattling, Germany, a member of the Vlasov Army also gave an answer:

It was by pure chance that during the war we found ourselves on territory held by the Germans and took up arms against the Soviet regime with German help.

We wore German uniforms because we had no others, but our shoulder emblems of rank and the badge on our sleeve, the Russian St. Andrew Cross, are all part of our country's age-old tradition.

Our men are Russians. We fought for a democratic idea against the Communist tyranny now gripping our country. We are fighting for a political idea and are not traitors or mercenaries.

We had one aim. The sacred aim of saving Russia. Had the Zulus fought against Stalin instead of the Germans, we would have joined them because only one thing matters—to destroy Stalin and Communism.

In any case the excuse of treason was invalidated when Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond, U.S.A., Retired, testified before a Senate Subcommittee investigating subversion in government departments on November 23, 1954:

MR. CARPENTER. General, I would like to go back and clear up one more point. Were you familiar with a man by the name of Tinio?

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[23] *Saturday Evening Post*, June 6, 1953.

GENERAL ALMOND. Yes, sir. Tinio was a nomad from a Turkestani area. I could not even locate it myself, if I tried. He had a partisan band and to look at them you would immediately decide they were cutthroat pirates. This band was a band of his own. He was a nomad. He came to Italy and joined with one of my regiments. He became a very reliable patrol leader. He many times and on more than one occasion occupied a sector of the front in the Appenines, virtually unoccupied by regular military personnel, between my right flank and the left flank of the Brazilian Division which was just beyond me or east of me, in the winter of 1944. He did such good work that he was known throughout my division. I think I gave him a certificate of accomplishment or something, just to be grateful about it.

But one day soon after the war ended in Italy, in 1945, I was queried from General McNarney's headquarters, which he very properly did, because he had a request from a Soviet mission that had come to Italy. Apparently, they had heard about this Tinio. The specific query of me was: "Was there a Turkistanian by the name of Tinio with a band operating in my sector?" I said, "Yes, there was one, but where he is now, I don't know." They said, "Is he in your area now?"

On investigation, I found he was still over there with the 370th Infantry, his friends. I got in touch with the colonel of that regiment. He said that he would and did talk to Tinio. He immediately discovered that he, Tinio, was very much alarmed, that the Soviets had queried about him. What he had done in his own country, I didn't inquire of him. I have no knowledge. He was a good fighter and on our side. But he was disturbed that the Russians wanted to know where he and his men were.

I also attributed it to the fact that he was not a convert of the Communists or Soviets and they were after him. I was ordered eventually to turn Tinio over to the Russians for transportation back to Russia. I did that with the complete conviction, based on things I had gotten from Tinio

and from those with whom he associated, that it meant his certain destruction, and that of his band.

SENATOR WELKER. May I interrupt, Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR HENDRICKSON. The Senator from Idaho.

SENATOR WELKER. Are you at liberty to tell who ordered you to return this gentleman to the Russians?

GENERAL ALMOND. Well, as I recall, that was a routine understanding. Russia at that time had been our ally, and it was their practice to send delegates into every area. I suppose Britain and France. They certainly came to Italy. I suppose to all of Europe. That was to find out what nationals they could claim title to within the bounds of what they said was Soviet Russia so that these people might be returned to their native land. I believe that that was the general policy that we followed, and I think that our being ordered to turn that particular band over to the group was a matter of routine.

SENATOR WELKER. Granted that it was a matter of routine, can you give the committee the name of the superior officer who ordered you to return them to Russia?

GENERAL ALMOND. No; I could not. But I might find that out. I know who the commander was. General McNarney was the commander. He was the Deputy Commander of the Allied, AFHQ, Allied Forces in Italy. It was a joint command. General McNarney was our American commander. He had many people under him and many bureaus. So I think a policy that had been decided would be something that would be transmitted to his headquarters and his staff would carry it out.

SENATOR WELKER. And he was bound to do that because of the policy followed?

GENERAL ALMOND. I think so.

SENATOR WELKER. There is nothing derogatory to General McNarney?

GENERAL ALMOND. No; not at all.

SENATOR WELKER. Thank you, General.[24]

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[24] Hearing of the Senate Subcommittee, Part 25, published in Washington by the U.S. Government Printing Office in 1954, pp. 2053-54.

Tinio by no stretch of the imagination was a traitor. He fought against Germany, but his service to the West did not save him and his men from extradition and death.

Finally there is the little-known case of Maurice Schaender, who was born in the United States. His father emigrated to America from Russia but decided to return to Odessa in 1926 with Maurice, his seven-year-old son. When Maurice was old enough he became a Soviet pilot, but he secretly remained an enemy of Communism.

As he had been born an American, Maurice thought his countrymen from the United States would welcome him with open arms if he defected to them. Working on this assumption, he flew from his airfield in Hungary and landed in Italy and asked the American authorities for asylum. The Soviets, naturally, demanded his extradition. The Americans only agreed to return his aircraft and Maurice was recognized as an American citizen, but the Soviets continued to demand his return. In the end the U.S. authorities relented. Schaender was extradited. He was flown to Moscow in an American plane, and during the flight he twice tried to commit suicide by bailing out without a parachute. These attempts were thwarted and on his arrival in Moscow he was physically attacked in the presence of the American airmen.

Schaender was not a traitor either!

The myth that the Yalta Agreement demanded the forcible extradition of Russians was spread in Britain, too.

In the House of Commons Mr. Stokes, M.P., after learning that certain Russians held in camps in northern Italy had been told they were going to Scotland to work in the coal mines whereas they were being extradited to the Soviet Union, asked the Government for information on this point.

Mr. Mayhew answered on behalf of the Government: ". . . The men repatriated fall within the categories of Soviet citizens who are serving members of the Soviet armed forces or who gave active assistance to the enemy, and who, under the instructions issued to the Allied Command in Italy by the British and American military authorities, fall to be repatriated under the Yalta Agreement on Repatriation. No undertaking has been given which would preclude repatriation of men within these categories."[25]

Either Mr. Mayhew was misled by his colleagues in the Government or he had another reason for not telling Mr. Stokes that the Yalta Agreement did not demand forcible extradition.

After that and between the years 1947 and 1952 little or nothing was heard about this page of modern history which had been deleted from the history books until it briefly erupted in the columns of the London *Times.*

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[25] Hansard, Vol. 437, Column 2318, May 21, 1947.

Lieutenant Colonel Oswald Stein, D.S.O., wrote to the editor of that newspaper:

Allow me, as one of the officers principally responsible to the British Commander in Chief in Austria in 1945-46 for carrying out the policy of His late Majesty's Government over the repatriation of POWs. . . .

In the British Zone of Austria the only Russians forcibly repatriated, against their will, were those who, being citizens of the U.S.S.R. on September 3, 1939,

a) Had taken up arms against their own country and against the Allies or

b) Had a prima facie case of guilt recognised war-crimes, established against them by the Soviet authorities and accepted by His Majesty's Government, or

c) were deserters from the Soviet Armed Forces. I would like to point out that escaped or liberated Prisoners of War and discharged hospital patients, who had not been recalled to the colours and were, subsequently deported by the Germans for labour, did not rank as deserters. . . .[26]

Colonel Stein then assured the readers of the *Times* that all those Russians who did not fall into any of the three categories were allowed to remain in the British Zone as bona fide refugees.

Knowing that the content of the letter was incorrect, Count G. Bennigsen of London wrote to the Editor of the *Times:*

The letter of Mr. Oswald Stein in your issue dated the 14th May, 1952, discloses either his ignorance of what actually happened in Austria, in the Drau valley, or his desire to forget the events of 1945-46 which the military command of this country cannot be proud of.

Unfortunately (for him) there still exist people who

[26] London *Times*, May 14, 1952.

managed to survive the shameful extraditions in Lienz, Peggetz, Spittal, Klagenfurt, etc., who can testify that the reckless extradition to the Soviet authorities was not limited to the categories mentioned by Mr. Stein.

It is absolutely impossible to refer to women and children as Soviet citizens who had taken up arms against their own country or the Allies, or people who were guilty of war crimes or as deserters from the Red Army.

There was no screening, but on the appointed date (June 1st in Peggetz) the victims were encircled by troops, tanks, and units of the Palestine Brigade which fulfilled orders with extraordinary violence; refugees, predominantly women and persons incapable of bearing arms, were forcibly driven into trucks and taken to the Soviet Zone. When the frightened mass of people broke through a hedge and tried to escape, they were tracked down, beaten and seized. Many committed suicide, and it was reported that approximately 70 corpses were fished out of the river Drau. . . .[27]

Two days after mailing the letter Count Bennigsen received a postcard from the Editor acknowledging receipt, but the letter was not published.

In answer to the Count's assertion that the Palestine Brigade played a leading role in the betrayal of the Cossacks in the Drava Valley, a widely held belief, a Cossack who was in Lienz during the extraditions and is now living in Israel shed some light on this question. He wrote:

The first English Major charged with extraditing the Cossacks contacted HQ for instructions after he realized that they would offer resistance. The reply he received read: "Use force where necessary."

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[27] Mailed to the Editor of the *Times* on May 18, 1952. The letter is translated back into English from Russian.

This officer refused to accept that order and as a result was removed from Lienz.

The town's Military Commandant, whom I assumed to be Jewish, spoke to me several times about our refusal to return home, as he could not understand our reluctance. I tried to explain through his interpreters. He had two of them, one translated from Russian into German and the other translated from German into English.

It was while I was at the Commandant's office that I met a young man, a Jew, who belonged to the 8th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and who had taken an active part in the extradition of the Cossacks. He spoke Russian perfectly and he told me, with tears in his eyes, "Though they were guilty of having collaborated with Hitler and therefore played a very indirect role in persecuting the Jews, the British Government should not have extradited them; especially the women, children and old people."

It was the Commandant of Lienz who saved my daughter and I from being extradited; he placed at our disposal a small room in British temporary barracks and placed a notice on the door forbidding anyone to enter. We were not the only ones he saved; there was a Georgian family consisting of a Georgian officer, his wife, his mother-in-law, and two children. He even sent a special messenger to fetch the Georgian officer back from the prison camp at Spittal.

In addition to this the Commandant did not take action against those Cossacks who, two or three days after the tragedy, returned from the mountains and, acting upon my advice, lived in an old house. (I brought to this house my friends Constantine Kargin and his wife, the Cossacks Varenkov, Liubibogov, and others.)

Since that time I have been repeatedly asked: Is it true that the Palestine Brigade took part in the Cossacks' extradition?

I have always given the same simple answer, No!

The Palestine Brigade, at the time of the tragedy, was

in the Tarvizo area of Italy[28] . . . and it stayed there until mid-June when it went to Belgium.

As I am now residing in Israel, I decided to make an investigation as to whether the Palestine Brigade was a participant.

I have met here soldiers from the Brigade, including some Russians, and not one of them confirmed that they were present and many did not even know that such extraditions had taken place. . . .[29]

It was exactly two years after Colonel Stein's letter to the *Times* that his article entitled, "Unconditional Surrender in Austria,"[30] was published, and in it he asserted: "Russians. The Cossack Corps, having been Soviet citizens on 1st September, 1939, were compulsorily handed over to the U.S.S.R. The White Russian emigres, if unwilling or unable to return to their country of domicile, were discharged and given D.P. status."

Again both Colonel Stein's statements were generalizations and not in accord with the facts, and, in any case, "as one of the officers principally responsible," he failed to reveal the methods employed to extradite members of the Cossack Corps or the Cossack Land.

In the first instance, we know from the previously

[28] Despite this assurance many Cossacks who have managed to remain in the West have recorded that they had seen many repatriation troops in the Drava Valley who wore a simple shoulder-flash with the word "Palestine" on it and spoke a form of Yiddish-Russian.

The Palestine Brigade wore a different shoulder-flash, a blue and white patch with a yellow Star of David superimposed upon it.

[29] Extracts from an article in the Russian language monthly magazine *Piket*, July 31, 1955.

[30] May, 1954, issue of the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution.*

quoted testimony of Captain Petrovsky, an officer of the Corps and a White Russian *émigré,* a citizen of Yugoslavia, that not all members of the Corps were Soviet citizens, and that all of them were handed over to the Red Army without any real attempt being made to ascertain whether they were eligible to be treated as displaced persons. Secondly, in the case of the Cossack Land, 68 per cent of the officers invited to the conference and extradited were White Russian refugees and entitled to be treated as such; they, like the others rounded up on June 1, 1945, in Peggetz and elsewhere, were not screened.

The year before Colonel Stein had written another article attempting to justify forcible repatriation but without mentioning the maneuvers used in 1945.

> . . . Finally, there is the unhappy case of those who took up arms and fought on the side of the enemy against their own country and her allies. They may have been actuated by local patriotism taking the form of separatism, religious or political ideologies; or merely by the desire to save their own skins under enemy pressure, or even by greed of gain. Whatever their motives it is hard to see how in such cases forcible repatriation can be avoided, or, indeed, should be avoided. Even when their motives are pure, these men fought against their own country and against their country's allies. . . . Political passions are apt to blind the eye of reason. . . ."[31]

[31] "The Repatriation of Prisoners of War," the *Army Quarterly,* Vol. 67, No. 1 (Clowes, London), October, 1953.

His logic is fraught with loopholes. If not, and we apply his principles to all aspects of the second World War, then the members of the anti-Hitler German underground movement and the German men and women involved in the Hitler bomb plot of 1944 who were in contact with the Western Allies or the Soviets are not the heroes the world has been led to believe. They were traitors who allowed "political passions" to blind them to their allegiance to Germany, and the survivors, according to Colonel Stein, should be forcibly extradited to the Federal Republic of Germany to stand trial on the charge of high treason. Equally the numerous German nationals who served in Western Allied forces should have faced treason charges a long time ago. And if this logic is carried to the other side of the Iron Curtain, then the wartime "Free German Committee" established in the U.S.S.R. under General von Paulus was a treasonable organization, and its members, some of whom hold positions of trust in East Germany, are also traitors. Of course, when universally applied, Colonel Stein's argument becomes ludicrous.

For as Hitler's Germany was a tyrannical state, so is and always has been the Soviet Union. Hitler's Nazis committed crimes against humanity in all European countries and were guilty of mass murder. Yet Stalin and Khrushchev are tarred with the same brush. During the Communist occupation of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania, to men-

tion a few examples, mass murders were committed. Nor should we forget the murder of the ten thousand Polish officers in Katyn Woods; the horrors committed by Communists during the Spanish Civil War, in Korea, or during the two Red revolutions in Greece. And added to this gigantic total are the millions of Russians killed or starved to death in slave labor camps (which still exist and according to the United Nations still hold some twelve million slaves) and the further millions of Russians deliberately starved to death by the unheavenly twins Stalin and Khrushchev in the Ukraine during the period of enforced collective farming.

By fighting against Communist tyranny and later asking the West for political asylum, the Russian anti-Communists of the Liberation Army and the Cossack soldiers[32] merely tried to achieve and obtain what the world had promised them under the terms of the Atlantic Charter, which was signed by the United States and Britain on August 14, 1941, and agreed to six months afterward by the Soviet Union, that the signatories will "respect the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. . . ." That was all the Russians, the Cossacks, fought for and

[32] By the end of the war more than 266,000 Cossacks were fighting Communism, and that figure does not include refugees, only combat troops.

wanted. The right to live in freedom, but in 1945 such a desire apparently became a crime!

Another two years elapsed before a further attempt was made in Britain to ascertain who ordered the destruction of the Cossack forces.

In January, 1955, Captain Henry Kerby, M.P. (Conservative, Arundel and Shoreham Division), who was born in prerevolutionary Russia, on learning what had taken place in the Drava Valley, tried to solicit information from the Government. His question was deemed inadmissible and the text of the missing or mythical Yalta clause and that of the Secret Treaty concluded on May 23, 1945, in Vienna between representatives of Field Marshal Alexander and the Soviet Supreme Command in the Balkans to deliver all the Cossacks as "Special units of the German S.S. guerrillas, as counterrevolutionary White bandits who had been in German pay" remained, and does to this day, a very closely guarded secret. Nor is there any information available from governmental sources to show how aged Cossacks, women, and children became classified as "members of the S.S. guerrillas or White bandits in German pay."

In December, 1957, there was yet another try to clarify this enigma.

The "Union of Cossack Officers, *émigrés* of 1920 who returned from Soviet concentration camps in 1956-57" submitted a petition to H.M. the Queen.[33]

[33] The spelling and wording have been reproduced faithfully from the original.

Union
of Cossack Officers
emigrated in 1920
who returned from the
Soviet concentration camps
in 1956/57.
Vienna XVI.,
Wattgasse 8/I
Austria.

To Her Majesty
Queen Elisabeth II of
Great Britain

Your Majestry,
December, 1957

We are Cossack officers and old Russian emigrants since 1920. On May 28th, 1945, we were quite undeservedly delivered into the hands of the Red Army in the town of Judenburg by your Majesty's Armed Forces, i.e. lieutenant colonel Malcolm and major Delas[34] of the 8th Army.

Only a few of us were able to survive and to return to the free West after having served long sentences in Siberia. We have grown old and contracted sicknesses there and are now unable to work. Therefore we beg your Majesty to assist and help us in some way you will find possible. The list of persons who returned from Soviet concentration camps is given below.[35]

1) Colonel Protopopov Alexander
2) Colonel Somov Boris
3) Colonel Belov Ivan
4) Captain Kalushni Andre
5) Yukshinski Vladislav Captain
6) Captain Protopopov Boris
7) Viatkin Fedor, captain
8) Captain Avdeev Piotr
9) Captain Petrovski Anatoli
10) Lieutenant Sergern-Korn George

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[34] Obviously referring to Major Davis.

[35] The list does not include all the officers who returned, but only those who belonged to the Union at the time of the petition.

11 Beleztki Andre
12 Hailo Danil
13) Sova Piotr
14) Durnovo Nikita

We remain, your Majesty, most respectfully,
The President of the Union
(signature)
Alexander Grekow, General
Vienna XVI., Wattgasse 8/I
Austria.
Deputy President
(signature)
Protopopov Alexander, Colonel[36]
Secretary of the Union
(signature)
Somov, Colonel.

Seven months later the President of the Union received a reply:

(1828/58.

British Embassy
Vienna
July 1, 1958

Gentlemen,

I am directed by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to refer to your letter dated December, 1957, and addressed to Her Majesty The Queen.

This letter has been carefully considered in London, but it is regretted that no action to assist the persons listed in your letter is possible.

I am, Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant
(signature)
(R. H. Tenison)

Union of Cossack Officers
Wien XVI
Wattgasse 8/I

[36] Colonel Protopopov later became President of the Union.

In May, 1958, the President of the Union, General Grekov, wrote to me and asked me to represent the interests of the Cossack officers. He also enclosed a more detailed petition:

Dr. Alexander Grekow
General A.D.
President of the Union of Cossack
Officers, émigrés of 1920 who returned
from Soviet concentration camps
in 1956/57.
Wien XVI., Wattgasse 8/I. Vienna 22nd May, 1958
Peter J. Huxley-Blythe, Esq.,
37, Wensley Avenue,
FLEETWOOD, Lancashire
England.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Cossack Officers listed in the Petition to H.M. Queen Elizabeth II of Britain I would ask you to represent their interests in all matters relating to their demands and to take all steps you will find necessary in this connection.

Yours faithfully,
(signed)
Dr. Alexander Grekow
General.

PETITION[37]

We, the undersigned, are Cossacks who fought against Communism in Russia from November, 1917, until 1920. In December, 1920, we were forced to emigrate with the Army of General Wrangel to Yugoslavia. There King Alexander received us warmly, finding work for all the soldiers and granting generous pensions to the aged.

[37] Translated from German.

In October, 1944, we were again forced to leave our homes, our second homeland of Yugoslavia, fleeing before the Communists to find refuge in Lienz, Austria. There we were arrested by British troops and handed over to the Red Army at Judenburg, Austria, on the 29th May, 1945.

We were arrested on the orders of General Alexander of the 8th British Army while the extradition to the Red Army was organized by Lieut. Colonel Malcolm and Major Davis. When we were arrested they gave us their word of honour that we would not be handed over to the Red Army.[38] In spite of this we were extradited. Those who did not go voluntarily or tried to escape were either shot or beaten with rifles. British soldiers searched us and took our watches, money, and other valuables.

On May 28, 1945, at 6:00 P.M. we learnt that we were to be handed over to the Soviets. We lodged a formal protest and produced our documents to prove to Lieut. Colonel Malcolm that we were old émigrés. He told us that we could show our documents to Joseph Stalin.[39] Following this, we immediately wrote letters to King George VI of England, to the British commander, to King Peter of Yugoslovia, and to His Holiness Pope Pius XII and gave these letters to Lieut. Colonel Malcom.[40] No answers were received.

Early in the morning of May 29, 1945, we were rounded up and transported from Lienz to Judenburg under armed guard. We were, upon arrival, handed over to the Red Army. General Dolmatov then took charge of us. He told us that he was astonished the British had extradited old émigrés as the Soviets had only demanded that the Western Allies extradite those persons who had been Soviet citizens.

As a result of our extradition we were all sentenced to 11-12 years in prison camps in Siberia, where we were

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[38] Lt. Colonel Malcolm in a letter to the author denied this. See page 210-211.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] From other available evidence, it is obvious that these letters were handed to a British officer and not Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm.

forced to undertake the hardest work.[41] Now we are old, ill, and unable to work for our living.

We therefore entreat Her Majesty the Queen of England and the British Government, who were responsible for our misfortunes, to grant us sufficient compensation for those lost 11-12 years we spent in Soviet prison camps.

Yours truly,

(signature) Somov Boris,
Wien III, Dietrichgasse 31/19, Austria.

(signature) Protopopov Alex,
Wien IV, Schwindgasse 16/3, Austria.

(signature) Kaljuschny Andrei,
Spittal/Drau, Marienheim, Austria.

(signature) Haylo, Daniil,
Klagenfurt, Lilienthalstrasse 14, Austria.

(signature) Belov, Vladimir,
Winklern 8, Post Einode, Fluchtlingsheim, Austria.

(signature) Bilinsky, Andreas,
Munich 8, Ayingerstrasse 23, Germany.

(signature) Kozores, Nikolai,
Frankfurt/Main, Meiseng. 26, Germany.

(signature) Avdyeff, Peter,
Berchtesgaden, Versorgungkrankenhaus, Germany.

(signature) Kozores, Sergei,
Frankfurt/Main. Meiseng 26, Germany.

(signature) Protopopov, Boris,
Kiel, Feldstrasse 109, Germany.

Those who signed the above petition were all members of the Cossack Land, and Captain Petrovsky, as a former officer in the Fifteenth Cossack Cavalry Corps, submitted a separate one.

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[41] The extradited officers were sentenced to ten or twenty-five years' imprisonment, depending upon the date of their arrival in the U.S.S.R.

AN OPEN DECLARATION[42]

I, the undersigned, an ex-officer of the XV Cossack Cavalry Corps, who fought during the Second World War with the German Armed Forces against world Communism confirm, on oath, the following declaration:

1) I am a Russian émigré and a former fighter against Communism in the ranks of the White Army in 1919-1920.
2) After the defeat of the White Army in the Crimea I was forced to leave my Motherland—Russia—and enter the Kingdom of Yugoslavia where I lived, studied, worked, and served until April, 1941, i.e., the capitulation of Yugoslavia.
3) Having joined the ranks of the Cossack Corps, I had only one aim, to fight against the enslavers of my country.
4) On May 28, 1945, after being deceived by the Command of the British 8th Army, I was betrayed and handed over to the Soviet Frontier forces of the M.V.D. at the town of Judenburg, Austria.
5) From 1945 to 1956 I was kept in various Soviet concentration camps, having been condemned, without trial, to a term of 10 to 26 years' imprisonment. This was solely because I had fought against the Communist Government, which for many long years has enchained the great Russian people.
6) The long years of suffering and separation from my relatives, being held as a criminal in the mines of Siberia, Vorkuta, and other places, I have lost my strength and health. As a result I am unable to undertake any real work and am forced to live as a displaced person, receiving only token support from the town hall.

Taking into consideration the fact that I was handed over to the Soviets, an illegal action, as the British Military Command knew I was not a Soviet citizen, I feel justified in applying to and requesting that Her Britannic Majesty,

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[42] Translated from Russian.

Queen Elizabeth II, grant me material aid to compensate for the years of Soviet imprisonment, 1945-1956 and so recompense me for loss of health and allow me to live out my remaining years without facing starvation.

June, 1958.
Western Germany. Captain Anatol Petrovsky. (1903)

All these documents, plus copies of letters I had received and a detailed analysis of the legality of the extraditions, together with details of the methods employed, were sent to the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan, on September 4, 1958, and I pointed out to him that compensation to these officers need not come from public funds but the money appropriated from the Cossack Bank on May 26, 1945, and the money realized by the sale—or the value—of the Cossack horses disposed of by Captain McNeil of the 8th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders would amply cover their modest needs.

The petition and enclosures were duly acknowledged on October 14, 1958, and on October 27, 1958, back came the decision:

In any further communication
on this subject, please quote
No. NS 1821/18
and address
not to any person by name
but to—

"The Under-Secretary of State"
Foreign Office,
London, S.W. 1.

FOREIGN OFFICE
S.W. 1.
October 27, 1958.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Lloyd to refer to your letter of the 4th of September to the Prime Minister, which has been forwarded to this Department, about persons of Russian origin who are now domiciled in Germany and Austria.

The case submitted by these officers was carefully considered in conexion with their petition to Her Majesty The Queen in December, 1957. A thorough examination of the facts led to the conclusion that no action could be taken to assist the persons named in your letter.

Although your letter and its enclosures have been studied, Mr. Lloyd can find no grounds for revising his decision.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(signature).

In answer to a letter that I wrote on December 8, 1958, to Lieutenant Colonel A. D. Malcolm, which presented some of the details contained in this book, I received a reply dated December 29, 1958:

. . . The petition which you quote, and the letter from Colonel Protopopow, contain so many misstatements, distortions, and misleading implications that I hardly know where to start to discuss them.

So far as I know all the Russians with whom we had to deal were part of the Cossack Corps who deserted from Russia in 1942 or 1943 and joined up with the Germans.[43] At the end of the war they were acting in a military role in North Italy and fled into Austria.[44] These traitors to

[43] It is difficult to equate old people, women, and children of all ages with soldiers of the Cossack Corps, and yet it was done.

[44] The Cossack Corps did not operate in northern Italy as a military unit. General Domanov had Cossack units at his disposal, which were used against partisans, but they only represented, at the maximum, 50 per cent of the Cossack Land population.

their country naturally had to be sent back to Russia who was our ally.

My own part was a small one: I was only a Battalion Commander and only had to carry out orders to administer some of the Russians and later to put them in lorries and trains. I took no political or policy decisions which were the responsibility of the Army or Corps Commander. Moreover other units also had other parts of the Cossack Corps to administer and I was only one of several with the same duty.

To deal with the Petition in detail:—

1) The "extradition" was not "organised by Lt. Colonel Malcolm and Major Davis."
2) We never gave any undertaking about what would happen to them, because we did not know.
3) No Russians were shot or beaten with rifles by any soldier in my Battalion. I was personally present throughout the operation, and can state that categorically.[45]
4) No Russians were searched or had valuables taken from them.
5) No Russians at any time showed me any documents and I did not make a remark about "showing them to Joseph Stalin."

The letter from Colonel Protopopow, of whom I have no recollection, is entirely untrue.[46] If the events he described did take place, they were nothing to do with me. We had to send the Russians off at very short notice in

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[45] This would imply that other units were operating in the Drava Valley, because there is ample evidence, from all sources, that extreme force, bordering on violence, was used to load the Cossacks into trucks and trains. At the same time it is difficult to see how Colonel Malcolm could have been present throughout the operation because it took place, simultaneously, over a distance of fifteen miles.

[46] Colonel Protopopov's letter is not reproduced here as it makes accusations of a personal nature which undoubtedly happened, but the officer concerned could not have been Colonel Malcolm and his letter does not introduce any new information about the fate of the Cossacks.

lorries and trains and they were only able to take hand baggage, but nothing was confiscated. If they were searched it was not in my area or by my men.

. . . The Russians were as he says despatched on two separate days: as far as I can remember Intelligence Officers were provided by Division HQ on both days to investigate the claims of any who could prove they were not Russians, but I am not prepared to swear to the details of the arrangements after a lapse of 13 years.

His final word, so far on the subject was:

. . . I would like to make it clear that I was merely a Battalion Commander who was given a job of looking after these Russians and carrying out the orders received from Division or Corps HQ for their repatriation. I had no part in or responsibility for deciding who was to be repatriated nor the method by which it was done.[47] If you want information about the policy, you will have to consult those who were in higher command. Major Davis had less to do with it. He was one of my Company Commanders, and I made him my liaison officer to transmit orders to the Russians and to receive messages from them. In just the same way another company commander looked after some 2,000 German troops who we also had in Lienz.

The only paragraph in your letter of Jan. 19th (1959) which I would like to refer to is towards the bottom of page 2, beginning "On June 1st, 1945."[48] My comment is:

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[47] This remark substantiates that the "conference" hoax was part of a policy decided at a high military or political level.

[48] I wrote: "On June 1, 1945, the Cossacks, students from the Military Academy, women, and children assembled on the green for divine service. The praying Cossacks were surrounded by British troops, tanks, and armored cars, and forcible loading began. During the melee the Cossacks offered *passive* resistance and as a result were attacked with truncheons, rifle butts and fired upon.

"Could you inform me whether you were present at Camp Peggetz on June 1, 1945, and whether it was soldiers from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who fulfilled the operation?

"I would add that the graves of the victims from Camp Peggetz which can still be seen are a silent testimony to this episode. No attempt to screen the inmates was made. . . ."

a) The "Drum Service" was arranged by the Priests as part of the "passive resistance" and if we had not proceeded to carry out our orders, it would have gone on all day.

b) There were NO tanks or armoured cars anywhere near Lienz. There may have been an intelligence officer in a scout car (unarmed) since at that time (only 3 weeks after the end of the war) there were no civilian-type cars available for most officers.

There were NO truncheons.

One company of A & S.H. (say 50 men) with unloaded rifles arranged the entraining of many hundred Russians.

No one was shot.

I believe possibly two deaths occurred when a crowd surged through a fence and some were knocked down.

The orders we received were carried out in the most humane way we could (as always with British soldiers). On the second day of entraining no force or even compulsion was used but the people climbed into the train quite quietly....

I hope you realise I am not a soldier, only, like many others in the war, a businessman who was trying to do his necessary job in the army.

Chingis Guirey, a Russian-speaking U.S. Army officer, who acted as a liaison between the American and Red Army, wrote this about the extraditions from southern Austria, and it conflicts with Colonel Malcolm's review:

A number of D.P.'s spoke to me about an incident which had occurred in May when about 5,000 Cossacks and Adigays,[49] men, women and children who had run from the Soviet Union, were at Kärnten in Austria. The British, allegedly under a certain General Arbuthnot, followed orders to repatriate them. One third killed themselves rather than return to the U.S.S.R. Eyewitnesses I spoke to

[49] Adigays—Caucasian Highlanders.

said fathers shot their children and then themselves; mothers threw themselves into rivers, over cliffs. Why? There must be something wrong when things like that happen, we told ourselves.

The most unpleasant aspect of this unpleasant business was the fear these people displayed. Involuntarily one began to look over one's shoulder. I heard so many threats to commit suicide from people fearing repatriation that it became commonplace. And they were not fooling.[50]

When I received Colonel Malcolm's letter of January 26, 1959, I wrote to General V. V. Naumenko in New York, not because I thought the eyewitnesses and survivors from Lienz were exaggerating when they told me their stories, but because General Naumenko had published, at that time, nineteen volumes in Russian containing documented reports on the extradition of Cossacks and must therefore be accepted as an authority.

By return came his reply.

Contrary to the testimonies of many hundreds who survived the tragic day of June 1st, 1945, in Camp Peggetz (near Lienz), Lieut-Col. Malcolm, like his other colleagues, denies the forcible repatriation of Cossacks.

This does not surprise me as already in May and June, 1947, Messrs. Mayhew and Bevin, answering the inquiry of Mr. Stokes, assured Parliament that there were no victims of forcible repatriation in Rimini and Bologna. . . .

Lt-Col. Malcolm also denies the presence of tanks in Peggetz, but those who lived through the June 1st tell us otherwise. . . .[51]

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[50] Page 132, *The Shadow of Power*, published by Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., Indianapolis & New York, 1953.

[51] Letter dated March 26, 1959.

Despite all the denials, the diplomatic double-talk, misleading statements, false deductions, etc., the facts about the forcible extradition of Cossacks in May, June, 1945—and Russians from Germany, the United States, and Britain—are confirmed by hundreds of pitiful survivors who are still in the West.

THE WEST LOOKS EAST

"OPERATION KEELHAUL,"[1] the code name given by the Western Allies to the policy of forcible extradition, did not cease after the first large-scale repatriation program had been fulfilled in 1945-46. In 1947—and some people say even later—individuals were handed over to the Communists to appease Stalin and to swell the number of concentration camp inmates, the backbone of the Soviet economy. However, these cases were confined mainly to Red soldiers who crossed into various Western zones of Europe and asked for political asylum.

It came to light in 1952 that the sending back of Russian anti-Communists captured wearing German uniforms was definitely contrary to the Geneva Convention, and therefore the people who devised the program were guilty of a major war crime.

This fact emerged when a large percentage of the Red Chinese soldiers captured by the United Nations Command in Korea, the flower of Mao Tse-tung's Communist China, refused to return home

[1] According to the dictionary, "keelhaul" means to "haul a person under the keel of a ship for punishment" and was a method of torture used by pirates.

and demanded that they be sent to Free China to join General Chiang Kai-shek.

Speaking on behalf of the West before a United Nations committee, the then United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Acheson, refused to accede to the repeated and heated Communist demands that all Red Chinese prisoners of war, who had earlier fought against the West—a crime of which the Cossacks were not guilty—be forcibly sent home.

"It is quite unthinkable to the United Nations Command that it should use force to drive into the hands of the Communists, people who would be resisting that effort by force." Mr. Acheson went on to say that forty years of international practice of dealing with prisoners of war left no doubt as to the men's future. "If a prisoner believed that it was dangerous for him, that he might die if he were sent home, and if he claimed asylum, and if the detaining State thought that it was an honest, bona fide claim, the detaining State could grant asylum."

To use Mr. Acheson's own words, it would be "wrong, improper, illegal, and unnecessary to return prisoners by force." And, having established its illegality, it is opportune to recall what the British prosecutor, Sir Hartley Shawcross, K.C., had to say at the Nuremberg trial when he demanded the supreme penalty for German officers who had been guilty of breaching the Geneva Convention covering the treatment of prisoners of war. "Let me deal first with what they did to prisoners of

war, for this alone, the clearest crime of all, demands their conviction and will for all time stain the record of German arms."[2]

The details of "Operation Keelhaul" have been closely guarded in the West, and the official United States dossier "383.7-14.1," entitled "Forcible Repatriation of Displaced Soviet Citizens" is still classified as "Top Secret" by the Pentagon. In the Soviet Union the opposite is the case. The Kremlin has insured that all Russians, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, are fully aware of the contents of this book plus details of the French role which is even more heinous.

Naturally, the Soviets have a good reason for publicizing the details; to make the anti-Communist Russians refuse to believe in or to expect any hope of liberation from the West.

A Red newspaper published the following in 1955, when some two hundred Vlasov soldiers were released from concentration camps and certain old *émigrés,* physically destroyed by hard labor, were allowed to return to the West:

We have even let "them" out [referring to the old émigrés] and we have forgiven "our own" [the Vlasov troops].

Whether they were Vlasov men or prisoners of war who did not want to return to the Motherland does not matter now. All their sins have been forgiven.

But the English and American bayonets, truncheons, machine guns and tanks used against them will never be forgotten.

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[2] Quotation from *The Nuremberg Trial,* p. 124, by R. W. Cooper; published by Penguin Books (London, 1947).

No Russian will ever forget Lienz, Dachau, Plattling, Toronto, and other places of extradition, including New York. And they must never be forgotten. It is a lesson all Russians must learn well. For it shows that you cannot trust the capitalist states in future.[3]

The lesson has indeed been learned well, and today the Russian people, among the most anti-Communist in the world as they have suffered the longest under Marx-Leninism, are equally anti-West as they are anti-Communist.

A spokesman for the "Russian Revolutionary Forces" (RRF), an anti-Communist underground movement operating, without any financial help from any Western country or Western agency, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, told me that in their leaflets distributed inside Russia they tell the Russian people that it is impossible to trust any Western government and rely upon them for support in an uprising against Communism.

I asked him why he and his colleagues adopted this attitude. He said that America particularly had adopted a policy akin to that of Hitler's; that the United States Government is determined to destroy Russia and replace her by small, artificial states that could easily be controlled by Washington. He quoted the Captive Nations Week Resolution as proof of this, because the Resolution demands the "liberation" of the Ukraine, Georgia, and "Cos-

[3] Translated from the Russian book, *The Unforgettable* by the late Nikolai Krasnov, who was one of the Cossacks released, and published by Russian Life, Inc. (San Francisco, 1957). Italics added.

sackia"—a state which has never existed (see Chapter Two). He said these same anti-Russian groups were being financed by the State Department controlled "American Committee for Liberation" and, to make matters worse, Washington was also financing Socialist Russian *émigrés* who wanted to replace Marx-Leninism with "pure" Marxism. Finally he referred to the subject of extraditions, and said there was no reason to suppose this act of betrayal would not be repeated in future.

I objected to that and mentioned the Red Chinese prisoners in Korea as evidence that the time of sacrificing human beings on the altar of appeasement was over. This spokesman for the Russian underground said I should read about the Tuapse affair before I made rash statements like that.

I looked up the details in the issue of *Russian Life* published in San Francisco, April 26, 1956, and this is what I found:

> The Senate Commission dealing with matters of internal security started its investigation of the affair when 5 sailors from the Soviet ship "Tuapse" were "repatriated."
>
> At the first session of the committee a 20-year-old friend of those repatriated, Victor Soloviev, who had avoided seizure by Soviet kidnappers gave evidence. . . .
>
> The public who were present when Soloviev gave his evidence laughed when he answered the question if he felt secure in the United States; "I would like to have a revolver." There was nothing to laugh at in this answer, though this is not understood by the American public. . . .

The article went on to show how the five sailors, who had been accepted as political refugees, had

been kidnaped by Red agents and that while U.S. officialdom knew what was happening it did nothing to prevent it.

A spokesman for the World Council of Churches, who had arranged their admission to the United States, said he had telephoned an official to warn him what was afoot and was told not to talk about this matter to anyone and was forbidden to go to the airport to interfere. "Somebody in a higher position than yourself has this matter in hand," he was told.

After going through many more newspaper reports, I came to the conclusion, the same as that of the RRF man, that there was every reason to believe that the five refugees had been kidnaped and, rather than risk upsetting international relations between the West and the U.S.S.R., American officialdom turned a blind eye to what went on.

The "National Alliance of Russian Solidarists" (NTS), a Russian *émigré* organization which has been financed by U.S. agencies since the early postwar days, also has its doubts about U.S. reliability in the Cold War struggle against World Communism.

In a report published by the External Research Staff, Office of Intelligence Research, Series 3, No. 76, December 10, 1951, of the Department of State there is a quotation about the NTS attitude on page 11 which reads: "That the basic anti-Western prejudice and the revolutionary romanticism remain

alive, is well illustrated in the most recent solidarist statement on this subject. Warning its followers against the dreadful prospects of a war on the side of the United States, *Posev* [the NTS newspaper] writes: 'Those persons who see in war the only solution of the Russian problem, are convinced that the Americans will not repeat the mistakes made by the Germans. To our regret, it is entirely unknown whence comes such a conviction. . . . In what respect is a democratic atomic bomb better than the totalitarian boot?' "

Then there is the known case of a colonel in the Red Army who met a Russian-speaking foreign businessman in Hungary a few days after the brutal suppression of the Freedom Revolt.

As there was no language barrier and in a moment of comradeship, in a land where the Red Army was hated, the colonel admitted that he and many other officers, of all ranks, in the Soviet armed forces were opposed to the Communist regime.

When challenged about that statement and asked why, if that were really the case, he had not joined the Hungarians like the thousands of Soviet troops who fought alongside the Freedom Fighters of Hungary instead of suppressing them, he remained silent for a few moments.

"Those of our men who fought against the regime are now dead. They never had a chance and we all knew it. To revolt successfully against the Kremlin we must have outside help. But it will

never come. The West will never help us. And now, perhaps, you will understand why we remain loyal to the regime."

Amazed at that answer, the businessman asked whether he and his colleagues in the Red forces would revolt against Khrushchev and the Party machine if Britain or America, or both, gave them solemn assurances of aid at the opportune moment.

"We wouldn't trust either Britain or America, no matter what they promised us. In the end they would betray us to the Kremlin." He went on to quote the Western extraditions as a prime example of Western duplicity.

Today the freedom of the West, of the whole world, does not depend upon nuclear deterrents or secret virus bombs; neither does coexistence offer us a means of salvation, as Lenin made clear: "In the pursuit of our aims we may, with all the powers of destruction, collaborate with some capitalist powers. . . . We may even contract with them some alliances, to bring them into a false sense of security. . . . Yet our aim is, and always must be, the domination of the world."[4]

No! Our sole hope of survival is that the enslaved millions will one day rise up against their enslavers and destroy the menace of international Communism for all time.

Neither is this an unrealizable dream. In 1953, during the East Germany revolt, approximately a

[4] *Izbrainyie Proizvedeniya.*

hundred Red soldiers refused to fire upon the German demonstrators. Three years later thousands of Red soldiers went over to the Hungarians and fought alongside them, and many more thousands refused to obey orders and put down the revolt. Those unknown thousands are now either dead or in Siberia. Yet, it was those martyrs of freedom who forced Khrushchev and the entire Soviet *apparat* to suspend operations against the Hungarians, because the Kremlin could not rely upon the Red occupation forces. Khrushchev had to withhold his bloody counteroffensive until fresh troops, mostly from Asiatic Russia, could be rushed into Hungary, where they expected to fight Western reactionaries.

The West needs the people of Russia and the other enslaved peoples in its fight against a common enemy, but the populations of the Communist bloc of nations dare not help us while we continue to talk about being anti-Communist but go out of our way to appease Red leaders; while we talk about freedom and demand it for Africa, but ignore the hundred million Red slaves, and until we publicly admit that we made a grave error in implementing "Operation Keelhaul."

To quote Eugene Lyons: "If we wish to make allies of the Russian peoples—as ultimately we must, as a matter of our own survival—there is a record to be explained and expunged. A record splotched with Russian tears and blood. The free world, and the United States in the first place, must find the

moral courage to repudiate and apologize for war and postwar blunders vis-à-vis the Soviet citizenry. They must acknowledge past mistakes and confusions. They must convince the Russian peoples that the talk of friendship and liberation is genuine, not a piece of hypocrisy to improve their bargaining position in relation to the Kremlin."[5]

General Koestring, the former German Inspector-General of wartime Russian troops, told an American investigator shortly after he was captured and referring to the extradition of the Free Russians: "Owing to our stupidity, greed, and ignorance, we Germans lost the greatest capital that existed, or can exist, in the fight against Communism — the hatred of the Russian people for their own government. In the past few weeks you Americans (and this can be applied to the British and French) have destroyed that capital for the second time by showing no understanding of what these Russians were fighting for. It may easily happen that in the future you yourselves will be calling on them to do precisely the same thing for which they are now being punished."

The Germans made mistakes which cost them the war in Russia. We have made mistakes, but we have time left to rectify ours and we can only hope this is done, for freedom must not disappear from the face of the earth to be replaced by Red tyranny.

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[5] *Our Secret Allies.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter J. Huxley-Blythe was born in the Robin Hood country of Nottinghamshire, England. He now lives with his wife and two children on the British northwest coast. He was educated at St. Mary of the Angels School, London, and in the Royal Navy, where he saw active service in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian, and Pacific theaters of operations.

Upon his return to civilian life in October, 1947, he studied all aspects of Communism both in the Soviet Union and elsewhere and his articles exposing the myth of coexistence began to appear in various European publications. In 1951 he specialized in political intelligence and this led him into contact with leading anti-Communists in the West and with the anti-Red resistance movements behind the Iron Curtain.

Mr. Huxley-Blythe was editor of the newsletter, *World Survey*, which was devoted to exposing all forms of Marxist expansion on both sides of the Curtain, and subsequently he was editor of the monthly, *The Free Russia*.

Over the years he has visited many European countries, gathering information for his articles and for this book. In 1957 an anti-Communist Russian resistance movement not only awarded him a Special Badge and Certificate to acknowledge his work for Russia, as opposed to the Soviet Union, but paid him the unique compliment of asking him to be a member of their organization.

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